

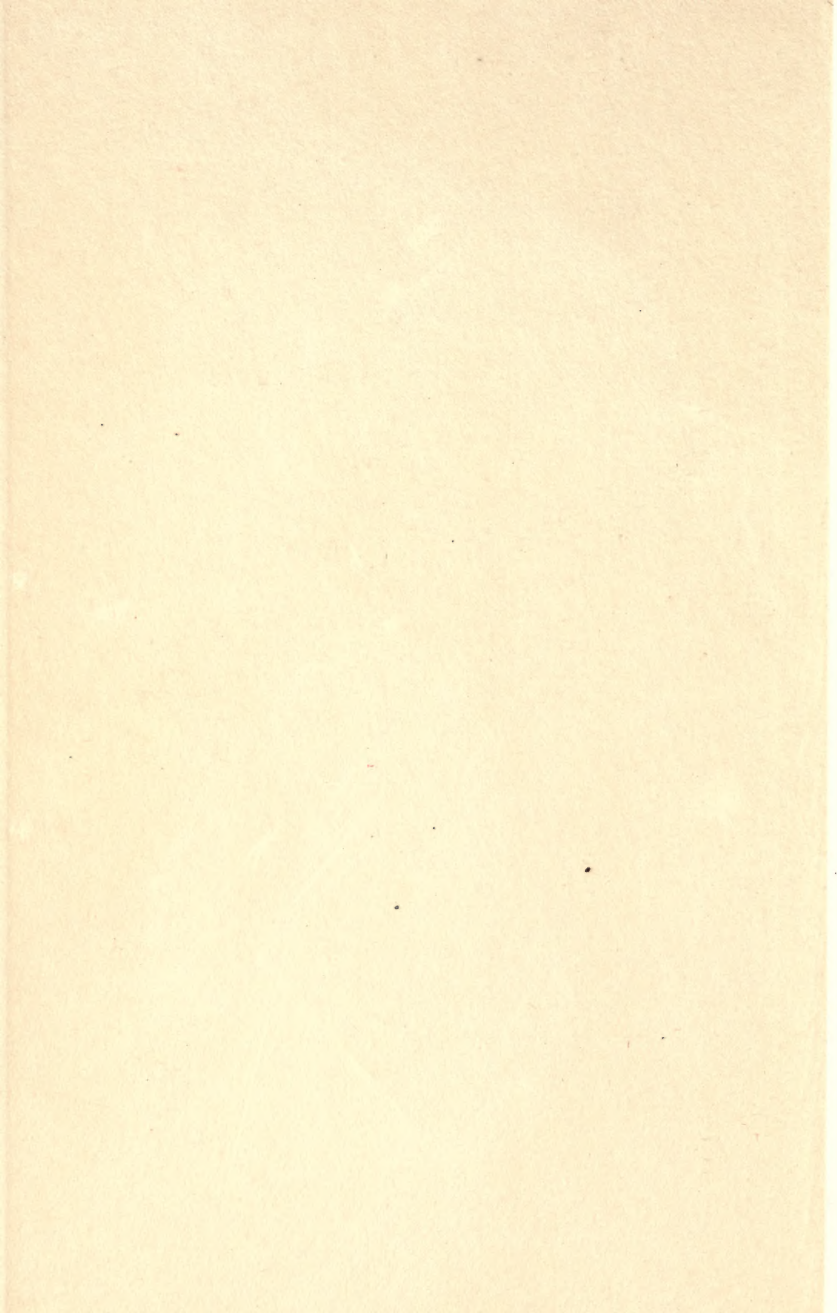
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SPIRITUAL EXERCISES  
OF  
ST. IGNATIUS  
—  
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A. M. D. G.

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES  
OF  
ST. IGNATIUS  
ADAPTED TO AN EIGHT DAYS RETREAT  
AND  
SIX TRIDUUMS  
In Preparation for The Semi-Annual Renovation  
of the Vows

All for the use of Jesuits only

By

REV. CHARLES COPPENS, S.J.

Coll. C JESUIT Regr  
BIBL. MAIL  
SEMINARY

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*Joseph Gummersbach*



A RECOMMENDATION BY OUR REV.  
FATHER PROVINCIAL

Rev. Dear Father:

It gives me pleasure to say a few words in praise of the new book of Fr. Charles Coppens on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Any new power that will help us to use these spiritual arms of St. Ignatius more effectively deserves the hearty approval of every Jesuit. The volume is intended for the use of Ours only, and will be found of great service in conducting retreats or in giving the Triduums that take place twice a year before the renovation of vows.

The customary meditations are well arranged, are solid, and at the same time practical. The points are proposed very clearly so as to be readily remembered.

I bespeak for this volume the good will of all of Ours, and trust it may be of great help to a more effective giving of the exercises and be in the hands of all.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

A. J. BURROWES, S.J.



## PREFACE

The Text of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, as translated into English from the Spanish Autograph, and edited for private circulation by Rev. John Morris, S. J., is printed in a small volume of only 125 pages. That little work contains all that the Saint composed in the Grotto of Manresa, and he never afterward wrote any additions to the text. But in explaining his Exercises to his first companions, and to others who made the retreat under his direction, he would adapt the details to their characters and the various circumstances. His followers did the same, without writing further additions or commentaries on the original text; they followed in their practice the traditional method as it had come to them from their saintly founder.

In the course of time, as was natural, considerable departures from the first process took place, some of which induced the danger of gradually losing the very spirit of the original Exercises. Among the learned men of our Society who labored most successfully to check such tendency, one of the most distinguished was the Father General John Roothaan, who in 1834 addressed a circular letter to all his subject, earnestly warning them against this peril. At the same time he furnished them a masterly work on the original Spanish and Latin texts, which he accompanied with a most valuable commentary.

For those preferring a Latin guide book, whether in making the Exercises themselves, or in explaining them to others, no work is more commendable than that masterpiece of Father Roothaan. Still, both before and since its publication, many other editions of the Exercises and commentaries on the same have been printed, both in Latin and in various modern languages, with full approbation and warm commendations of the Superiors of the Society; and excellent reasons appear to exist why successive generations of Jesuits should continue their efforts to enrich this valuable literature. In particular the eight days retreat, which all our members perform every year, gains additional interest and impressiveness when a wider range is presented, affording a choice among a large number of approved guide books to direct them through this fertile region of spirituality.

The spirit permeating all of these must ever be the same, so too the main outline of the truths proposed and the general plan of the Exercises. Yet experience shows that there remains a wide room for variety in comments, suggestions and practical applications. Therefore, when the time for each one's annual retreat comes round, there is shown by many Fathers an earnest desire for some late publication on the subject, that will lend new zest to the familiar solid doctrine. To satisfy such reasonable wishes is the chief reason why the present pages are modestly presented to his brethren by

THE AUTHOR.



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# THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST. IGNATIUS

## PREPARATORY CONSIDERATION

### I

The days of the retreat are the most important in the year. 1. *The most important for the Exercitant*; for his principal duty and highest interest are the salvation and spiritual progress of his own soul: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." What would it profit any of us to convert even thousands, if he loses his own soul? And if any one imagines that his own salvation is already secured, and no longer needs his principal care, he is a very ignorant or a conceited man.

2. *These days are the most important for the salvation of our neighbor*; since, the more one becomes a man of God, as a good retreat tends to make him, the better he will do the work of God. And the salvation of souls is pre-eminently the work of God, not that of human talent or industry.

3. *They are the most important for the glory of God*; since the glory we render to God is in proportion to our holiness, the purity of our intentions, the

ardor of our love and our other virtues; the increase of all of which is the direct purpose of the retreat.

## II

The yearly retreat is important for all religious, whatever be the spiritual condition of their souls.

1. *Those who are leading fervent lives* are likely to receive during it special lights and graces enabling them to draw nearer to their Divine Lord; *Amice, ascende superius*, "Friend, come up higher." The Holy Ghost is ever laboring at the sanctification of souls, of such especially as show themselves deserving of peculiar love by their faithful co-operation. Now this fidelity is most strikingly exhibited when we abandon all earthly cares to devote our whole hearts to the loving worship of the Lord, as we do in a retreat.

2. *Such souls as are gradually allowing their fervor to cool* amidst the distracting cares of an active life stand in special need of the Spiritual Exercises, to arrest their downward course.

When one runs down a hill, his descent is accelerated by his own weight, and he needs special help to avoid a serious fall. Such is the case of those who are losing their fervor, and a good retreat provides the remedy.

3. *If any have unfortunately already lost their balance*, and are hurrying along to destruction by the commission of serious faults, or by yielding to a no less dangerous tendency to tepidity, a good retreat is almost the only way of saving them from ruin. In connection with these thoughts it is well to reflect that

some one of our annual retreats will be our last; it may be the present one. Many of those who made the retreat last year are now in eternity; and not a few of them saw no more reason then to expect so early an end than we do now.

### III

It is very consoling for those who enter on these Spiritual Exercises to remember that their efficacy for good is far greater than men are apt to imagine; they are not merely human, but in some respects Divine; hence their extraordinary power to sanctify us.

1. *These exercises are Divine in the truths they teach us*; for they consist chiefly of meditations on the word of God; and the word of God is the seed of salvation: *Semen est verbum Dei*. It is not the learning of philosophers or scientists that brings us eternal life, but the teachings of Christ; and these are the power working in the retreat.

2. *These Exercises are Divine in the principal director* who conducts them; for in them the Spirit of God instructs and enlightens the soul of the exercitant and sanctifies it. The printed page containing these teachings, or the Father Master who explains them is not the chief power at work during the retreat, no more than the audible voice of Christ converted and sanctified the souls of His hearers. God speaks to our heart in the retreat, saying, "Hear, O my people, and I will speak. . . . I am God, thy God" (Ps. 49).

3. Not only the several truths considered during these days are the word of God, but the *whole plan of*

*these Spiritual Exercises is in a true sense Divine.* For no one who is familiar with the facts of St. Ignatius' life can believe that he had acquired, at the time when he produced this masterpiece of sacred wisdom, such knowledge of the spiritual life as it exhibits on every page. When he came to Manresa, he was a mere novice in spirituality. And in fact he himself always felt convinced that he owed these Exercises to Divine illumination. Thus, as Bartoli relates, "on one occasion the Saint confessed to Father Laynez that one hour of prayer at Manresa had taught him more concerning spiritual things than he could have learned from the instructions of the wisest doctors" (Life, I. p. 57).

The object which this unique book has accomplished was to reduce the direction of soul to a science, that bases on certain principles of faith an exact and positive method, which, guided by the rules prescribed, insures almost infallible success. Considering the circumstances in which it was written we cannot but attribute this work to superhuman aid. Hence its wonderful efficiency, testified to by countless witnesses, and continued in the experience of three centuries till the present day.

#### IV

Hence the *high esteem in which these Spiritual Exercises are held* by the best judges in such matters. For instance, when the learned Pope Leo XIII wished to select the best means by which he might prepare himself and his domestic prelates to gain the plenary in-



dulgence of the jubilee year 1900, he had two of our Fathers conduct in his palace the Exercises of the retreat; and, at his advanced age of over 90 years, he attended in person nearly all the meditations. His successor, Pope Pius X, gave similar marks of his esteem for these Exercises. There exists in our society a venerable tradition, which seems to date back to the earliest years of the Institute, to the effect that St. Ignatius was specially assisted by the Blessed Mother of God in composing his unique masterpiece. The inhabitants of Manresa, some years after his death, embodied this tradition in a beautiful painting, which they placed in the cave, representing him as kneeling before the figure of the Blessed Mother and Child, with his eyes fixed upon her lips, and his right hand extended as if ready to write what she dictated to him.

Father Henry Watrigant, S. J., relates that this tradition has been confirmed at various times by well authenticated revelations. Thus he says: "The venerable Father Louis de Ponte narrates that, when in the year 1600 Ours entered on their annual retreat, his penitent, the venerable Marina de Escobar, also began her retreat; and the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and said that the Blessed Virgin Mary had been as it were the foundress of those Exercises, having instructed St. Ignatius to put them in that form."

## V

Having now understood what efficiency is attached to a good retreat, we naturally ask ourselves *what we must do to secure these precious results*. We must:

1. Enter seriously into that deep recollection which is the proper atmosphere for a retreat, avoiding during it all unnecessary intercourse with the outside world.

“God and I” should be the only objects of my thoughts; all else is a hindrance to perfect success.

2. We must diligently apply our mental powers to master the truths proposed to us; for that purpose St. Ignatius bids us occupy ourselves during a full hour in each of the meditations or contemplations assigned. He adds that, “in time of desolation, the exercitant, in order to go against the desolation, and to overcome the temptation, must always remain a short time beyond the full hour, so as to accustom himself, not only to resist the enemy, but even to overthrow him” (Ann. 13).

3. In the 5th Annotation the Saint says: “It will much benefit him who is receiving the Exercises to enter upon them with a large heart and with liberality towards the Creator and Lord, offering all his desires and liberty to Him, in order that His Divine Majesty may make use of his person and of all he possesses according to His most holy will.” He says elsewhere: “The more liberal one shall show himself towards God, the more liberal he shall find God towards him, and the more fit he shall daily be to receive in greater abundance His graces and spiritual gifts” (Rule 19).

4. Both during the meditations and at all other times of prayer, great fervor should be employed to obtain from the Lord those copious graces which He has in store for us, and which He desires to bestow;

but it is a general law of His providence that they must be eagerly asked for, and to the best of our power deserved by our efforts and co-operation.

If these means are diligently employed, we can indulge a quiet confidence of great results; for the Lord does not invite us to a rich banquet without providing for the full satisfaction of His guests.

## THE FIRST DAY

The first day of the retreat is mainly devoted to what St. Ignatius calls "*The Principle and Foundation.*"

Christ bids us act like "a wise man that built his house upon a rock,—and it fell not because it was founded on a rock" (St. Matth. vii, 24). The truth now considered is the rock on which the whole structure of our spirituality is to be built. Bartoli, in his life of St. Ignatius, narrates that a learned Doctor of the University of Paris, Martin Olave, used to say that one single hour spent in meditating on this foundation had taught him more than long years of theological studies. Such too has been the experience of many others. Father Everard Mercurian spoke of this foundation as alone sufficient to effect the most astonishing changes in a soul, by uprooting all its earthly affections and directing its desires to God alone.

## THE FIRST MEDITATION

### ON THE END OF MAN

The first part of the Foundation is: "*Man was created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.*"

To begin any of our meditations well, St. Ignatius bids us stand, for the space of a *Pater Noster*, one or two paces from the place at which we are to meditate,

and with our mind raised on high, consider how God looks down upon us, and then adore Him with an act of reverence and self-humiliation.

Then follows the *Preparatory Prayer*, which is also the same for all the meditations. It is to ask our Lord for grace that all the acts of our memory, our understanding and our will may throughout the meditation tend directly to the service and praise of the Divine Majesty.

*1st Prelude.* Imagine your Blessed Saviour appears before you, looking lovingly on you and saying: "My son, I am now going to teach you the first truth in the spiritual life."

*2nd Prelude.* Beg that you may understand this truth as the Saints have understood it.

*POINT I.* Consider the words, "*Man was created.*"

1. "*Man.*" What is man? Compared to God, man is a mere nothing, like a little gnat flitting in the sunshine; yet among material things man is a masterpiece, endowed with the most wonderful powers and potentialities. Man is like a musical instrument, from which the Divine Spirit can draw the most exquisite harmony, as He has done from millions of saintly souls. But if not responsive to His touch, it gives out harsh and false sounds, marring the harmony of God's world. A man may live like an Angel, or like a demon or like a brute animal.

2. Man was "*created,*" that is, made out of nothing, for so was the world; now even a savage understands that the thing made belongs to the maker.



Therefore I belong to God; He can do with me and require of me what He pleases.

*POINT II.* Consider what God requires of man. If God has made man for a purpose, He certainly requires of him to work for that purpose. But God can do nothing without a purpose, a purpose worthy of Himself; His wisdom requires that. Now He alone is worthy of Himself; therefore He directed all things to Himself, as the Book of Proverbs says: "The Lord hath made all things for Himself" (xvi, 4).

It is not that God needs any creature; for being all perfect He is self-sufficient; but right order requires that He make all His creatures tend to Him.

How then must all creatures tend to God? By glorifying Him; that is by *praising, reverencing and serving God*.

1. *Praising God.* To praise God is to show forth and proclaim His excellence. The Psalms are full of such praises; for instance Psalm 116: "Praise the Lord, all ye nations, praise Him all ye people." We must not live then to exalt ourselves, or to get others to praise us, but render all honor to God, to whom it all belongs.

2. *Reverencing God*, worshipping Him, as we do when we pray. Thus the Angels in Heaven ever do, crying out; "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty" (Ap. iv, 8). Thus we put statues of Angels on the altar to express our reverence for the Blessed Sacrament. Thus we should express our reverence for God whenever we speak to Him in prayer. How do I pray habitually? With what reverence of bodily pos-

ture and of mental attitude? We should thus make our meditations practical.

3. *Serving God.* To serve another is to do his bidding; we are then created to be ever at the disposal of God, to obey Him whenever He makes known His will: "If you love me, keep my commandments," He says.

*POINT III.* Consider the further consequences of our praise, reverence and service of God; "*And by these means to save his soul,*" that is to attain eternal happiness.

The good God has so wisely and bountifully ordained all things that by glorifying Him we glorify ourselves and reach the fulfilment of all our desires. But by refusing to glorify Him we degrade and utterly ruin ourselves.

Now we are made free to do the one or the other. This freedom is a wonderful gift, a glorious gift in one way, making us like to God and capable of securing our own bliss forever, with God's grace, of course: but on the other hand putting on us a terrible responsibility. No other power on earth can control a man's liberty. When St. Agnes, a mere child of 13 years, refused to do wrong, the whole power of the Roman Empire could not bend her will; on the other hand, the influence of the holiest education cannot make a child virtuous without its free co-operation.

Can a man then, by refusing to serve God, deprive the Creator of the glory that he was intended to render Him? Certainly not; but he can freely choose to glorify the goodness of God by faithful service, thus

securing at the same time perfect happiness for himself, or choose to glorify God's justice by his eternal punishment.

*Colloquy* with God Almighty, my Creator, and with Christ, my Redeemer; that I may do my full duty and secure eternal bliss.

## THE SECOND MEDITATION

### ON THE END OF CREATURES

The second part of the foundation says: "*And the other things upon the face of the earth were created for man, and to help him to attain the end for which he was created. Whence it follows that man must make use of them in so far as they help him to attain his end; and in the same way he ought to withdraw himself from them in so far as they hinder him from it.*"

The task of the exercitant is three-fold:

1. Intellectual: he must strive to understand the truths proposed correctly, clearly and fully;
2. Practical: he must apply the truths to his own conduct;
3. Prayerful: so as to obtain aid from Heaven to succeed in both these respects.

*The Preparatory Prayer* is the same as in the first meditation. It is so too in all the following meditations. It will not be necessary to remind the exercitant of this in the subsequent exercises.

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you behold our Dear Lord before you, who says: "My son, I will now teach you the second truth of the spiritual life."

*2nd Prelude.* Grant, O Dear Lord, that I may understand it fully and learn from it how to improve my conduct.

*POINT I.* Consider these words: "*The other things upon the face of the earth are created for man.*" and man for God. Here is a clear exhibition of God's wisdom; the inanimate is for the vegetable world, the vegetable for the animal, and all for man; inferior things are for the real good of superior ones. I am not then created for material enjoyment: *Ad majora natus sum*, "I am born for greater things," I must not degrade myself by the perverse gratification of my animal nature.

*POINT II.* Consider the words: "*And in order to attain the end for which he was created.*" How do the other things aid man to attain his end? In various ways.

Some things need only be considered to raise man's heart to God and prompt him to reverence the Divine Majesty. "The heavens show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declares the work of his hands," etc. (Ps. 18).

Other creatures are for the use of man, as food, drink, clothing, etc. Others are to be endured, that he may practise submission to God's holy will; such as excessive heat and cold, sickness, death, etc. Others are to be abstained from, as was the forbidden fruit in Paradise.

Everything thus becomes for man a stepping stone to Heaven.

*POINT III.* "*Whence it follows that man must*



*make use of them in so far as they help him to attain his end; and in the same way he ought to withdraw himself from them in as far as they hinder him from it."*

Consider how this rule may be observed or violated. For instance, (a) In our use of food and drink. The relish attached to the use of them is good as a means to promote our health; but under its influence excess is often committed, by which health may be injured, disease contracted and life shortened. Am I always blameless in this respect?

(b) Sleep may be excessive and lead to the neglect of duty.

(c) The study of nature, of the sciences and the fine arts may greatly promote the glory of God and indirectly the good of souls, and it may be wrong to neglect it; but it may also be abused; it is only a means, and must not be made an end in itself, to the neglect of our true end.

(d) Such too is the reading of literature or of the news of the day.

(e) Such is our intercourse with superiors, our brethren and outsiders. The bee gathers honey, the spider poison from the same plant.

*Colloquy, asking grace to use all things wisely.*

## CONSIDERATION

### ON THE END OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

#### I

When we consider the conduct of men generally, we see at a glance that the lives of vast numbers of them



are not in conformity with the truths we have been studying; and we are reminded of the words of Christ: "Wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are that go in thereat. How narrow is the gate and straight the way that leadeth to life, and few there are that find it" (St. Matth. vii, 13, 14). Of course the way of salvation, owing to His preaching and His merits, is now much wider than when He spoke those words; but yet it appears to be, through men's own fault, much narrower than it should be. What is the condition of religious in this respect? It is well worth while to examine what is the effect of our religious vocation on the most important of all our interests, the attaining of the end for which we were created. Now it is clear that the religious life offers many great advantages for that purpose.

1. We are created to *praise, reverence and serve* God. Now the religious life is entirely directed to these objects. 1. We are constantly employed in the promotion of the *praise* and glory of God: all our labors are directed to it; the place we live in, the occupations assigned us and all the circumstances of them are selected with a view of this purpose.

2. The *reverence* shown to God is continually fostered by a long succession of common and private prayers, Holy Masses, recitation of the Divine Office, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, etc., from morning till night, day after day, year after year, till death.

3. The *service* of God, the accomplishment of His holy will, is not confined to the observance of His

Commandments and those of His Church; but, by adding the rules of the Order, the will of God is made known and accomplished in all the details of life.

Thus the religious is constantly occupied with the praise, reverence and service of God. His heart is not divided between different objects of his love: "He that is without a wife," says St. Paul, "is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God; but he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife; and he is divided" (I Cor. vii, 32, 33).

The condition of mind in religious is *like that of the Blessed Angels*, who are busy with God and the things of God. It is *like that of the Holy Family* while it abode on earth; so that a religious house is a copy of the Holy House of Nazareth.

And all this is not to last for a little while only, but for a whole lifetime; for the religious vows give stability and permanence for all years to come.

Therefore this sacrifice is compared by theologians to *a holocaust*, the most perfect of the ancient sacrifices, in which, namely, the whole victim was consumed in the fire. Thus one religious is likely to do more than a number of seculars for the praise and reverence and service of God.

## II

*And by these means the religious easily saves his soul*, thus attaining the second end for which he was created. The good Lord has promised this in so many words. For he said: "Every one that hath left

house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, shall receive a hundred fold and shall possess life everlasting" (St. Matth. xix, 29).

The hundred fold mentioned in this promise is not to be passed over lightly. For although it constitutes no portion of the eternal life of which we are speaking, still it is intimately connected with it. For it embraces a multitude of heavenly graces: a Divine protection in dangers, a peace of soul that the world cannot give; all of which make the attainment of eternal life far more easy than it usually is outside of the religious state.

With this prospect of eternal bliss for ourselves is united the special efficiency which the good Lord deigns to bestow on religious to procure the salvation of many souls. True, the exercise of the sacred ministry, with the sacramental power, is the ordinary channel of sanctification established by Christ in His Church; but there is a special efficiency in personal virtue to bring souls nearer to God; and the direct purpose and effect of the religious life is to increase personal holiness. The archenemy of man knows well who are the most successful in saving souls, and those he opposes with all his power. The fact that religious are more fiercely hated and opposed by the enemies of God, clearly shows that they produce more fruit in souls.

### III

Of course the religious life has its hardships, it is a *life of sacrifice*; but that is its honor and its recom-

mendation to a noble soul: "The kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away" (St. Matth. xi, 12). All the Saints have led lives of sacrifice, like their Divine Master: "Jesus said to His disciples: If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (Ib. xvi, 24).

To aid us in carrying the cross of the religious life cheerfully, let us reflect what *magnificent prizes* are held out to us.

1. There is the bright *crown of virginity*, with the distinguished privilege of more intimate union with Jesus in Heaven. "These are they who were not defiled with women; for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth" (Apoc. xiv, 4).

2. There is also the glory of being seated, with Christ, on the *judgment seat*, when He will come in His Majesty on the clouds of heaven: they are to judge the world, rather than to be judged. Thus at least the Venerable Bede explains the promise made by Christ to His Apostles, which for a parity of reason, he extends to religious: "Amen I say to you that you who have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the seat of His Majesty, you also shall sit on twelve seats judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (St. Matth. xix, 28).

3. Another most valuable advantage of the religious life lies in the *protection* it affords against dangerous temptations to sin. True, as long as we live upon earth we may fall from grace, and forfeit, through our own grievous fault, the rich store of merit so far



accumulated and our right to eternal bliss: "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall," writes the Apostle (I Cor. x, 12). The best a man can do is to surround himself with such securities as lessen the assaults from without and strengthen the will within him. And such is undoubtedly the religious life. Its vows of poverty, chastity and obedience cut off the fiercest assaults of man's triple enemy, the world, the Devil and the flesh; and its constant practices of piety and mortification provide a copious supply of Heavenly assistance to resist temptations.

Therefore *St. Bernard draws this consoling picture* of religion: "It is a state," he says, "in which man lives with more purity, falls more rarely, rises more promptly, walks more securely, is more frequently bedewed with celestial graces, sleeps more peaceably, dies with more assurance, passes more quickly through Purgatory, and is more richly rewarded."

#### IV

However, we must bear in mind that membership of a religious Order does not necessarily secure all those advantages, and that in the same Order they are *obtained by different persons in very different degrees*. The chief requisite to obtain them is to be a fervent religious. The more generous one shall show himself to God, says St. Ignatius, the more generous he shall find God towards him, and the more fit shall he daily be to receive in greater abundance His graces and spiritual gifts. The rapidity of our spiritual progress is not like that of travellers in a ship on the



sea, all of whom advance at the same rate, whether they are walking or sitting or lying down; but our progress is like that of men travelling on a highroad, each of whom has his own rate of advancement according to his own efforts.

Thus St. Aloysius, St. Stanislaus and St. John Berchmans advanced further in a few months than most religious do in many years.

While we have perhaps broken strong bonds in tearing ourselves away from home and kindred, let us not be attached to little things; a slender silken thread is enough to keep a bird from gaining its liberty, and thus a little trifle may prevent us from soaring aloft to higher regions of sanctity. God fully deserves the love of our whole hearts, which are too small to be divided between Him and the things of earth.

Let us examine ourselves during this retreat, and see whether we are drawing all the profit we should from the rich treasury of our religious vocation.

## THE THIRD MEDITATION

### ON INDIFFERENCE TO CREATURES

The third part of the Foundation: *"It is therefore necessary that we should make ourselves indifferent to all created things, in so far as it is left to the liberty of our free will to do so, and is not forbidden; in such sort that we do not for our part wish for health rather than sickness, for wealth instead of poverty, for honor rather than dishonor, for a long life rather than a short one, and so in all other things, desiring and*

*choosing only that which most leads us to the end for which we were created."*

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you see bright Angels standing before the throne of God, waiting to be assigned as guardians to new-born infants; they are perfectly indifferent to take charge of rich or poor children in any part of the world.

*2nd Prelude.* Ask for a like spirit of perfect indifference to all creatures, caring for God alone and His holy will.

*POINT I.* Let me ask myself sincerely: am I now fully convinced that I am in this world for no other end than to praise, reverence and serve God, and thereby to save my soul? that I must use creatures only in as far as they conduce to this end? This is right and just, it is highly useful for me; it is necessary, the one thing necessary;—all else is vanity; it passes away in a short time.

"The world's a stage, and men are only players,  
They have their exits and their entrances."

*POINT II.* What prevents me from always living up to that conviction? The reason is that I allow myself to be influenced by various predilections and aversions, by my likes and dislikes for certain things. If I were perfectly indifferent, as the Angels are, whose will has perfect control over all their affections, then I would choose on all occasions only what God wills, as far as His will would be known to me. Can I acquire such an indifference? I cannot help feeling an inclination to like or dislike certain things; for it is

an effect of the fall of man that our passions often rebel against the spirit. But I can control these promptings to a great extent, and with God's grace, acquire considerable power over their movements.

To strengthen this habit of control over my various inclinations is the purpose of the present meditation: that is meant by making myself indifferent to all created things.

And still St. Ignatius wisely adds: "In as far as they are allowed me and not forbidden"; lest the uninstructed might imagine that they might lawfully allow disorderly sentiments to arise within them without at once driving them away.

How can I make myself indifferent? By considering the evils connected with the things to which I am inclined, and the good to be derived from those disliked.

*POINT III.* Let me consider in detail some principal objects to which a man is not naturally indifferent, but he may with God's grace make himself so.

I. *A long life or a short life.* For all I know, my eternal salvation may be much better secured if I should die soon than if I live yet many years. It was so with many persons, who were holy in their youth and were afterwards perverted. Therefore the Book of Wisdom says: "He pleased God and was beloved, and living among sinners he was translated. He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding and deceit beguile his soul" (iv, 10, 11). What a blessing it would have been for a Luther or a Henry VIII to have died young. As I do not know what is

best for me, I ought in all reason to leave it all to God's disposal, and make myself indifferent to a long life or a short life.

2. *Health or sickness.* In comparison with the salvation of my soul the enjoyment of health during this life is of slight importance; and common sense would bid me readily to resign the latter to secure the former. Now God alone knows when this is necessary. We read of a virtuous man in England, who made a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Thomas a' Becket to be cured from blindness. He was heard, and returned rejoicing to his home. But he found soon after that the free use of his sight led him into many new temptations. So he returned to the same shrine and begged the Saint that, if it were for his greater spiritual good to be deprived of sight, this might be done rather than that he should fall into mortal sin. The Lord worked this second miracle to show what was really best for him.

3. *Riches or poverty.* The young man whom the Saviour invited to sell all and give to the poor and then follow Him had not the courage to answer the call, because he was very rich. And Jesus remarked it was difficult for a rich man to save his soul. It is then very wise not to care for riches, but to make one's self indifferent on this point.

4. *Honor rather than dishonor.* History is full of examples of men who were virtuous while in an humble station, and who, after being raised to honors, became proud; now a proud man is odious in the sight of God.



5. *And so of all other things.* Let me ask myself whether there is any point on which I am not indifferent, and then consider how I may bend my mind in the opposite direction; then pray earnestly to our Lord and His Holy Mother to gain indifference to all created things.

*POINT IV.* Let me consider what will be the good effects of attaining such indifference. They will be:

1. Considerable increase in virtue; for thus my will becomes conformable to the will of God: I thus practise faith in His providence, and confidence in His paternal care of me.

2. Security from many dangers of sin, to which I should have been exposed if I had persisted in controlling my own fortunes.

3. Quiet of mind in the happy thought that God, to whom I abandon myself entirely, will dispose all for the best: "For we know that to them that love God all things work together unto good" (Rom. viii, 28). "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee" (Ps. 54). "My children, behold the generations of men, and know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord, and hath been confounded" (Ecclus. ii, 11).

On the other hand those who are not indifferent to the things of earth live in constant agitation of mind, restless in the pursuit of fancied blessings, and disappointed when they fail to obtain them; and, what is still worse, frequently exposed to the danger of sin, sometimes of grievous sin, in their eagerness to obtain their desires, or in their reluctance to do their duty.

*Colloquy.* Pray earnestly, both during the medita-



tion, when proper desires are aroused in your heart, and especially at the conclusion of the meditation, that you may totally detach your affections from all things created, and obtain the grace of indifference to all creatures.

## THE SECOND DAY

We have now fully understood the end, or purpose, of our creation, which is to praise, reverence and serve God and thereby save our souls. We must next consider what will be the result if we freely refuse to live for that end, and prefer to do our own will in opposition to the will of God. The Lord is not going to prevent us from doing so; He will not interfere with the exercise of our free will. Were a child, in the fervor of its first Communion, most earnestly to beseech God to let it die young rather than live to commit a mortal sin, He would no doubt give it additional graces to avoid sin, but He will not control the child's freedom. Every one of us must carve out his own future by his own free choice. We know what we have to do to make that future sovereignly happy; and we are now to consider prayerfully what evils threaten us if we refuse to do it. For this purpose we will now study certain historical facts, and see how other persons have fared.

### FIRST MEDITATION

#### ON SIN

This exercise affords a favorable opportunity to explain the ordinary process of meditation, which

consists in applying to a chosen subject our three intellectual faculties, the memory, the understanding and the will, as shall now be shown in detail.

*Preparatory prayer*, as usual.

*1st Prelude.* Let me imagine I behold the scene which Christ described saying: "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven" (St. Luke x, 18).

*2nd Prelude.* I ask the grace to understand how severely God has punished the sins of others, so that I may conceive an intense dread and horror of sin, especially of my own sins.

*POINT I.* Consider the first sin we know of, that by which the angels fell. Apply to it: 1. The *memory*, recalling the facts. They were created by the same Lord that made me, and for the same end, to praise, reverence and serve Him, and by this means to attain eternal bliss. They, like me, were put to a trial of their obedience; they were free to serve or no, as they chose.

A multitude of the angels refused to obey: they sinned. These were cast out of Heaven into Hell, and punished with the direst woe forever.

2. *The understanding* takes in the striking points of analogy between their history and that of man: If they were so severely punished, what must man expect when he imitates their rebellion? What a dreadful evil sin must be, since a good and just God hates it so. Their great number did not save the angels, nor will the number of bad men be a protection; all men are like a little dust before the infinite God. Man's excellence is below that of the angels, in power,

in knowledge and in all natural gifts. They sinned but once; perhaps I have sinned repeatedly. What must I think of myself? of my past? of my future?

3. *My will* is gradually moved by these and similar considerations to detest sin, to dread sin, to detest myself if I have sinned, to beg God to spare me. I must stir up my will to hate sin more and more, to protest to God my hatred of it, my self-reproach: "Spare me, Oh Lord, according to the multitude of thy mercies."

*POINT II.* Consider the sin of our first parents.

1. *My memory* recalls the facts. They were created by the same God and for the same end as I; they were loved by Him and placed in a garden of delights, in Paradise, destined to enjoy the vision of God forever. They were free. God allowed Satan to tempt them, as He allows him to tempt me: "The serpent said to the woman: No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And the woman saw that the tree was good, and delightful to behold: and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat, and gave to her husband, who did eat" (Gen. iii, 4-6). They were in consequence cast out of Paradise, condemned to more than nine hundred years of toil and suffering, and to death, and all the evils that have befallen them and their posterity have been the punishment of sin.

2. *My understanding* must weigh these facts and reason on them, so as to realize the boundless evil of

rebellling against our sovereign Lord and Master. It is not only the words of God but even more His deeds that show us what He is and how He acts. His severity in punishing sin in creatures for which He had shown such generous love exhibits the utter abomination He has for moral evil.

3. I must stir up *my will* to detest that same evil, to dread my own weakness which exposes me to sin again, to regret my past offenses, and to form strong resolutions for the future, praying earnestly for God's help.

*POINT III.* St. Ignatius bids us consider a third sin, namely that of some person who has gone to Hell for one mortal offense. St. Liguori, in his little book "On the Commandments and Sacraments," narrates a number of what he calls "Melancholic Examples," of persons who appeared after death, and said they were damned for some one or more mortal sins which they had not properly confessed. One is the case of a woman, who had been reputed to be very devout, so much so that after her death her body had been treated with the greatest veneration. But the day after her burial she appeared to the Bishop of the place as if laid on a blazing fire, and she told him that she was damned on account of a mortal sin of thought she had concealed in confession.

1. *The memory* must recall the facts; it matters not whether they are well authenticated or not, since the doctrine is certain that one mortal sin unpardoned is enough to damn the soul.



2. *The understanding* reasons on the case, so as to realize vividly the sad results of dying in sin.

3. *The will* is thus stirred up to hate sin as the greatest of all evils, and to avoid it at any sacrifice, according to the warning of Christ: "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee. For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than thy whole body be cast into hell" (St. Matth. v, 29).

*Colloquy* with Jesus dying for my sins upon the Cross, begging for grace to repent of all past sins, and to make strong resolutions against future offenses.

## SECOND MEDITATION

### ON ONE'S OWN SINS

It is well to remark here that, 1. The fact that St. Peter was forgiven did not prevent him from mourning for his sin all the rest of his life; 2. Many persons repine excessively under afflictions because they forget that they have deserved much worse by their sins; 3. The Saints mortified themselves severely for small faults; 4. This meditation is congenial to humble souls, like the Publican, but painful to the Pharisee; 5. The least we can do is to detest our sins heartily and to atone for them.

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you stand before God like the humble Publican, saying: "O God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

*2nd Prelude.* Beg for an intense grief and confusion for your sins.

*POINT I.* Briefly recall to memory the series of your sins, from your early years, through childhood, boyhood, youth, through subsequent periods of your life, noticing successive places of abode, various occupations, companions, etc.

*POINT II.* Study to understand the evil of your sins, considering:

1. *Every species of sin has its own peculiar vileness;* for instance, lying is so odious that its very name is offensive, stealing is still worse, so that one caught in a theft is disgraced for life, gluttony is disgraceful, pride is odious to God and man, envy is mean, profanity is provoking to the great and holy God, deceit is despicable, vanity is ridiculous, impurity lowers a man beneath the brute, etc.

2. *Every sin is an insult to God.* When a person insults his equal, he incurs his displeasure and deserves punishment; more so when he insults his superior; and the offense is the greater in proportion as the party insulted is more distinguished and the offender lower in comparison. Now consider how great is God, who is insulted, compared to man, who insults Him:

a. The meanness of man. What is one man compared to a thousand men, to a thousand thousand, or million men? Like a little gnat flitting in the sunshine. And what are a million men compared to the one thousand five hundred millions of men now inhabiting the earth? And what are all these together compared to all the former and the future generations? And what are all men compared to the Angels of God?

And what are all creatures compared to the Creator

Himself? Less than a drop of water compared to the vast ocean. What then am I compared to God? And yet, if I have ever sinned, I have put myself above God, my will above His will. If then I have often sinned, what punishment have I not deserved?

b. See the meanness of the body of man, which corrupts all it uses, and needs constant care to keep it from becoming insupportable, even to itself. See how death degrades it, how even sickness degrades it. And the soul of man: see how it is ever inclined to conceive and foster evil thoughts and desires, how it prompts to evil words and actions; so that St. Ignatius, who had been a proud soldier, when he came to know himself better, looked on himself as a running ulcer flowing with corruption. And yet in sinning, this vile being, man, rises up to insult God.

c. On the other hand consider the greatness of God, by comparison with the littleness of man: compare His power with man's weakness, His knowledge with man's ignorance, His eternity with man's short span of life, His bounty with man's selfishness, etc.

*POINT III.* I will arouse my will to detest my sinfulness, indignant against myself, and wondering that God continues to bear with me, to favor me, to have His Angels protect me, the earth support me; and He forbids all men to injure me, commands them to love me.

*Colloquy* with my crucified Lord, begging His mercy and His pardon.

## CONSIDERATION

## ON THE CONFESSION OF THE RETREAT

The direct purpose of the first days of the retreat is to purify the soul of all guilt of sin and all attachment to sin. For this purpose the Sacrament of Penance is the most efficient means, and the confession of sins is an integral part of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

## I

*Confession may be of three kinds:* a general confession of one's whole life, or a considerable portion of one's life; the ordinary, or weekly confession; and thirdly the annual or semi-annual review, which is of rule in many religious institutions.

1. *A general confession* is obligatory if the preceding confessions have been badly made; it is useful at the age when a child has been fully instructed in its religious duties; when a person enters on a permanent state of life, and perhaps once more, when one approaches the portals of eternity. The anxiety entertained by some souls to repeat their general confessions over and over again is most unreasonable; it fosters scrupulosity and is injurious to spiritual progress.

2. *In the ordinary, or weekly, confessions*, which, in the case of religious, rarely include a mortal sin, earnest care must be taken that one or more real sins, recently or formerly committed, be confessed, so that matter be presented for absolution; and also that there



be elicited an act of supernatural contrition for those sins, or at least for some one of them. Else the Sacrament would be invalid, for real supernatural contrition is one of its essential parts.

3. *An annual or semi-annual review* of the weekly confessions affords marked advantages, especially when it is made during the retreat: a. Faults are thus likely to be noticed which attracted little attention at other times. As when a ray of sunshine enters into a rather dark room, and reveals more dust on the furniture than was noticed before, so the Divine light of grace, entering the soul during the Exercises, discovers various defects of which there had been no clear perception. That is a good occasion to obtain pardon for them.

b. When our faults are thus seen together, they are apt to arouse more contrition, and thus secure more entire pardon.

c. Such a review gives us a clearer knowledge of ourselves and shows us what defects we should chiefly labor to correct.

## II

*To prepare for such a review*, we should consider those sins especially which are more likely to be committed by religious. In mentioning them we shall follow the order of the Decalogue.

*The First Commandment* regards the worship of God. Under this head come wilful distractions or negligences in prayer, which may spoil considerable parts of our spiritual exercises; disrespectful handling



of holy things, and the unworthy reception of the Sacraments. This last sin is of course rare among religious, but very grievous if it should occur; for it bears the guilt of sacrilege.

*The Second Commandment* requires the observance of our vows. The vow of poverty is violated when a religious disposes of any temporal goods without permission of his superior, acting as if it were his own property. That of chastity attaches to the violation of the sixth and ninth commandments the additional guilt of sacrilege. The vow of obedience is violated when a religious refuses or neglects to do what he is commanded to do under obedience, or does what he is thus forbidden.

*The Third Commandment* is not likely to be violated by religious.

*The Fourth Commandment* obliges subjects to reverence and obey their superiors when they mean to impose an obligation of conscience; and they must be supposed to mean it when the good of souls or the glory of God requires them thus to use their authority. A precept of obedience in virtue of the vow is rarely imposed; but commands in matters of some importance derive from the natural law power to oblige any subjects to obey their lawful superiors, independently of any vow. If serious consequences are likely to follow from the violation of the command, the sin may be grievous.

*The Fifth Commandment* says: "Thou shalt not kill," and forbids all wilful injury to another's or to one's own body. Of course religious are not likely to

injure others violently; but this commandment may be violated in many other ways. One may neglect his own health or injure it by indiscretion in the use of food and drink, thus bringing on diseases by which many a life is shortened. A superior or an infirmarian may neglect the proper care of sick or delicate persons, a pastor or teacher that of school children, etc. Injury done to the souls of others by scandal, or bad example, may also be considered under this commandment; and there are very many ways of giving scandal.

The Fifth Commandment also forbids quarrelling, unreasonable anger, hatred and revenge. A religious teacher, for instance, must be careful that, when obliged to punish children, he does not allow himself to be prompted by passion; and revenge is totally opposed to the spirit of Christ.

*The Sixth Commandment* forbids any act of impurity wilfully committed; and it has this peculiarity that it admits of no slight matter, but the sin is always grievous when the impure pleasure is sought or admitted with full knowledge and full consent.

*The Seventh Commandment* forbids stealing and all injustice done to others in their material possessions. The religious state is a strong protection against these sins; still it does not make them impossible. It may happen that a religious does not fulfill all the conditions of a contract; as for instance, when a teacher neglects his class or some of his pupils, so that these do not really get the value of the tuition charges.

*The Eighth Commandment* enjoins both truthfulness and regard for another's good name. A lie is

never allowed, and mental reservations must not be used but for good reasons, lest human intercourse lose the charm and security of mutual confidence.

Any lessening of another's good name without sufficient reason is sinful, and it is doubly so when the accusation is false; even a rash judgment or suspicion is wrong, yet it may be mistaken without being rash. The great rule is: "See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another" (Tob. iv, 16).

*The Ninth and Tenth Commandments* forbid sinful thoughts and desires in matters forbidden by the Sixth and Seventh Commandments. On this point St. Ignatius remarks that when an evil thought is promptly dismissed, there is merit, not sin; and if it returns again and again and is always resisted, there is more and more merit. But a venial sin is committed when one listens to the evil suggestion so as to dwell a little on it, or to admit some carnal delight, or to be somewhat negligent in rejecting it. A grievous sin supposes that the thought or desire is fully consented to.

## THE THIRD MEDITATION

### ON ETERNAL LOSS

*Remarks:* The purpose of the first days of the Exercises being to inspire an intense and lasting hatred of sin, it is highly proper that we should meditate on the principal punishment of sin, the eternal loss of the soul, the pains of Hell. Many Saints have been led

to Heaven by the road of fear, some religious Orders acknowledge this as their chief spirit. No one can afford to do without the fear of God; we should all nourish it; so that, if ever our love of God should be too weak to keep us from sin, the fear of Hell may restrain us. We descend into that abyss in thought at present, that we may not hereafter be cast into it in reality.

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you see in the center of the earth a vast ocean of fire, in which are plunged countless souls condemned to eternal punishment.

*2nd Prelude.* Beg earnestly from your Sovereign Lord for an intense and abiding fear of those awful sufferings and for a firm purpose of never sinning again.

*POINT I.* Recall to memory what we know of Hell; in particular:

1. That its existence and its dreadful nature are as clearly revealed in Holy Writ as any truth whatever. For instance, Christ said: "If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out. It is better for thee with one eye to enter into the kingdom of God, than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not extinguished. For every one shall be salted with fire" (St. Mark ix, 46, 48). Then there is the parable of Dives and Lazarus (St. Luke, xvi, 19-31).

2. That Hell awaits all those who die in mortal sin, whatever they may have been in life, religious or seculars, bishops or priests.

3. That vast multitudes go there: "Broad is the



way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat" (St. Matth. vii, 13).

Many who were supposed to be holy. See St. Liguori, "Melancholy Examples."

Many who had begun well, as Judas had.

4. That I am in danger, as long as I live, of sinning mortally, of dying in sin and losing my soul. Perhaps some are in Hell through my fault.

*POINT II. What are the sufferings of the body in Hell?*

All the senses will be tormented, as for their gratification God has been offended. Chiefly the sense of touch, and that by the horrible torture of fire: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (St. Matth. xxv, 41), "Which of you can dwell with everlasting burnings?" (Is. xxiii, 14).

God showed St. Teresa in a vision the place the Devil had prepared for her in Hell. She narrates it thus: "I was one day in prayer, when I found myself in a moment, without knowing how, plunged apparently into Hell. I understood that it was our Lord's will that I should see the place which the devils kept in readiness for me, and which I had deserved by my sins. It was but a moment, but it seems to me impossible that I should ever forget it, if I were to live many years. The entrance seemed to be by a long and narrow pass, like a furnace, very low, dark and close. The ground seemed to be saturated with water, mere mud, exceedingly foul, sending forth pestilential odors and covered with loathsome vermin. At the end was a hollow place in the wall, like a closet, and in that I



saw myself confined. All this was even pleasant to behold in comparison with what I felt there" (Coleridge, "Life of St. Teresa," Vol. I, p. 133). "She says," Father Coleridge adds, "she cannot describe what she felt. There was a fire in her soul. She suffered unendurably in her body. All that she had suffered in diseases, or in what Satan had been allowed to inflict upon her, was as nothing in comparison; and she saw there was to be no intermission, no end to the pain. But the pains of the body were as nothing to the pains of the soul. She describes the anguish as a sense of oppression and stifling in the soul, all the while tearing itself to pieces with remorse and despair."

*POINT III. What are the sufferings of the soul?*

1. *The memory* will recall the abundance of graces, by which salvation could so easily have been secured; the example of companions who were innocent or sincerely penitent, who are now in Heaven; the soul's own goodness and happiness at the time of its first Communion and at other periods of its life.

2. *The understanding* will then fully realize that one thing alone was necessary while on earth, that life was given to work out salvation, that all the rest was vanity, that all illusions are now dispelled, and there is no happiness to be found by the creature except in God; there is only total disappointment, absolute loss of all satisfaction; and this pain of disappointed love will then be greater than all the other sufferings.

3. *The will* then will desire only God, for the love and possession of whom all its nature longs, because it was made for Him alone. Therefore the soul will

hate its own perverseness with a sovereign hatred, and curse itself in its absolute despair.

4. The soul will always have present to its mind *the awful sentence* pronounced by the Supreme Judge: "Depart from me into eternal fire." "Eternal": What, in comparison, are days, or nights, or months, or years of suffering? Ever in pain, ever in despair; no end, no hope of an end or of any mitigation.

*Colloquy* with Jesus crucified, dying for our sins; with Mary, the refuge of sinners.

## THE THIRD DAY

### THE FIRST MEDITATION

#### A PREPARATION FOR DEATH

*1st Prelude.* A captain of infantry had been ordered by his general to lead his company at the first dawn of light the next morning up a neighboring hill where the enemy had just planted a masked battery. To spend the intervening night he had a log cabin allotted him. He felt it was a dangerous task assigned him, as he was likely to be shot while ascending the hill at the head of his men. Yet he faltered not, for he was brave. But before lying down to rest, he lit a candle, pulled out his prayer book, and knelt down to prepare himself for a good death.

Imagine that God gives you the present hour to prepare for your own approaching death.

*2nd Prelude.* O Lord: give me the grace of making to-day a thoroughly good preparation for death.

*POINT I.* *It is absolutely certain that I shall die,* it is only a matter of more or less delay; "It is appointed unto men once to die" (Hebr. ix, 27). "Dust thou art and into dust thou shalt return" is the sentence pronounced on me, as on all men. No sensible man doubts this, yet many try to forget it, and live as if the sentence were not for them. O my Lord God! I will not be so foolish; and I accept with humility the

sentence of death. I have deserved it, and I will suffer it in punishment and expiation of my sins.

*POINT II. All the circumstances of my death are very uncertain.* 1. *The time.* No one but God can assure me of another day of life. Many are at this moment in vigorous health who will be dead to-morrow. I may be one of them: "If thou shalt not watch, I will come to thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I shall come to thee" (Apoc. iii, 3). A thief comes when least expected. Many are sick for a time and yet expire suddenly before they realize their danger. Even many of the Saints were called away in the middle of their most important careers: St. Francis Xavier when on the point of entering China, St. Thomas Aquinas before he could finish his *Summa of Universal Theology*, St. Bonaventure during the General Council of Lyons, etc. Am I ready? Was I ready at any hour of last year?

2. *The place* may be anywhere; we cannot find a spot secure against the shafts of death.

3. *The manner*; It may be sudden, whether from a latent disease which we never suspected, or from any of the multitudinous accidents so common in the modern rush of life.

Or it may be preceded by weeks of suffering in an unconscious or semi-conscious condition. Even when the danger is known to others, it is often hidden from the patient. My Lord God! I humbly submit beforehand to all the circumstances Thou hast determined shall attend my death, to all its physical and mental sufferings, to its sudden stroke or lingering approach.

Only grant me the grace of being well disposed when it shall arrive. Make known to me, I pray, what sacrifices I must make that I may be well prepared.

*POINT III. What shall be my sentiments when death is nigh?* Some rejoice at its approach; like St. Paul, they wish to be dissolved and to be with Christ. Many are horrified when it comes, and wish in vain that they could live their lives all over again. Now is the time to prepare, then it will be too late. Many again, even good Christians and religious, would then wish to make some more or less important changes before expiring. Now is the time to make them.

I have seen a novice dying most joyously, with these words on his lips: "I know I am going to Heaven." I have seen a religious priest, who had led a pious and zealous life, bursting into tears on his deathbed, explaining that he now realized how much more he could have done for God and the good of souls, and how bitterly he regretted his former negligences. And yet he was a model pastor of souls. What shall be my sentiments?

*Colloquy* with Jesus and Mary, begging earnestly to know now what is still wanting to me, that I may provide in good time; "O Lord! make me know my end—that I may know what is wanting to me!" (Ps. 38).

## THE SECOND MEDITATION

### ON THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT

*1st Prelude.* Imagine that your soul has left your body and is now to be judged by Christ.



*2nd Prelude.* Ask earnestly that you may understand all things now as you shall then, and that you may act accordingly.

*POINT I.* Consider when that judgment will take place: "It is appointed unto men once to die, and, after this, the judgment" (Hebr. ix, 27). Human tribunals delay trials to take evidence; not so God. One moment we may be sinning or meriting, the next moment we are judged for it. No warning is given beforehand, as for a college examination. The rich man of whom Christ said that he was going to build new barns, saying to his soul: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer," was rebuked by the Lord, saying: "Thou fool, this night they will require thy soul from thee" (St. Luke xii, 16-20).

Be ever ready. Make frequent acts of perfect contrition. Make every confession as if it were to be the last of your life.

*POINT II.* Consider the persons present: I. *The soul*; Father Gaudier, S. J., describes it thus: "It receives a novel manner of knowing, without the body, by which its entire life is represented to it at a glance. It thoroughly understands what is the nature of created things, its own present condition and the new aspect of things; and it sees itself naked, solitary and deserted by all, with nothing but its good and bad works, in the presence of its Judge. Hence arises a very different view of its own concerns and all created and external things from what it had before. Besides, its will is changed; for all love of created goods is

vanished, and in its stead there is a most powerful impulse towards God as its last end. This tendency, now that the hindrance of the body is removed, urges it most forcibly to this union" (Introd. ad Solid. Perfect., p. 196).

2. *Christ* is now manifested to the soul. He is the God who condemned to eternal woe the rebel angels, Judas, and all who are in Hell, and who has rewarded all the Saints with eternal bliss. As man, He is now going to examine what fruit the soul now before Him has produced. No other parties can well be expected to be present, except, perhaps the Guardian Angel and an evil spirit, ready to execute the sentence.

*POINT III. Consider the account to be rendered, of every thought, word, action and omission from the first dawn of reason till the last breath. Even good works may contain many imperfections, as St. Paul explains by this comparison. "Other foundation no man can lay but that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be manifest; for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire; and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is" (I Cor. iii, 11-16).*

The examination will embrace all the Commandments of God and of the Church, the duties of one's state of life, the proper use of one's talents, one's opportunities, etc.

a. There are *two consoling thoughts* in this matter.

1. The religious vows probably act as a second Baptism, cancelling all former debts. St. Thomas attributes this effect to the perfect dispositions of the person making them. If this is the reason, then it would seem that the renewal of vows may have the same effect, whenever it is made with equally good dispositions.

2. Whatever has once been forgiven remains forgiven. Merit when lost may return, but forgiven sins do not return.

b. Yet there are *two classes of sins that may well cause anxiety*.

1. Those of which we have never truly repented, perhaps because we were too proud to admit we were to blame, and laid the blame on others instead.

2. Those sins which we have very often confessed, but which we have made no serious efforts to avoid in future, perhaps because we had no real contrition for them.

*POINT IV.* The sentence will be just what is deserved; for a judgment is not an act of mercy, but of the intellect seeing the truth of things and pronouncing accordingly: "I will judge thee according to thy ways, and I will lay upon thee all thy crimes. My eye shall not spare, neither will I show mercy" (Ezech. vii, 8, 9). "Then will he (the Son of man) render to every man according to his works" (St. Matth. xvi, 27).

If a mortal sin be there, all is lost: "If a just man shall turn away from his justice and shall commit iniquity—he shall die in his sin, and his justices which

he hath done shall not be remembered" (Ezech. iii, 20).

The sentence will be final, because there is no appeal to a higher tribunal, and we can no longer merit a change: "The night cometh when no man can work" (St. John ix, 4).

The sufferings of Purgatory come to an end, but merit neglected to be acquired can never more be gained.

We may well exclaim with St. Magdalene de Pazzi: "It is a terrible thing to have to stand before the judgment seat of God."

*Colloquy.* Ask to understand all things now as you shall realize them at the judgment.

## CONSIDERATION

### ON PURITY OF CONSCIENCE

The main purpose of the first part of the Spiritual Exercises, or what St. Ignatius calls the first week, is to purify the soul from all stains of sin, and to strengthen it against all temptations to sin in future. Of course mortal sin is the principal evil to be destroyed, it is the greatest evil in the world. Since the religious life is essentially the way of perfection, it presupposes the destruction of mortal sin; being the way of the counsels, it supposes the observance of the Commandments.

Yet it is quite proper that religious in their yearly retreats should review the Exercises of the first week, the meditations regarding mortal sins and the fear of the Lord, not so much to obtain pardon of sins com-



mitted, as to strengthen their resolutions and to take precaution against committing sins in the future. In fact, as a rule, religious do not commit mortal sins; and, although they must be constantly on their guard against temptations,—because, while the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak,—yet it is a consoling truth that they rarely fall so low. A religious that frequently commits mortal sins lives far below the normal standard of his state of life. He is indeed greatly to be pitied, and is in serious danger of becoming a reprobate. Of course no one should ever be discouraged, but such a person should arouse himself to fervent prayer and vigorous exertions; he is walking on the brink of the precipice.

Whoever has come to the present part of the Spiritual Exercises is supposed to have conceived an intense horror of mortal sin. But we ought not to be satisfied with attaining this first degree of purity of conscience; we ought to strive seriously to attain the second degree, or to confirm ourselves in the same; that is, we ought also carefully to avoid the commission of all deliberate venial sins. We must distinguish between two kinds of venial sins, the deliberate and the indeliberate. Both kinds suppose that, while committing them, we are aware that we are doing something which God forbids, or omitting what He commands; else we do not really displease Him. But the sin is deliberate when we fully notice the evil, and do it nevertheless with full consent of our free will; else it may be called indeliberate. Indeliberate sins will escape from time to time even very virtuous persons, owing to our unruly



passions and the weakness of the human will in consequence of Adam's sin and of evil habits.

Each of such faults, singly considered, could be avoided; for whatever cannot be avoided at all cannot be laid to our blame; but all cannot be avoided together. Thus a beginner may be able to pronounce correctly every word on a page of his reader, but will not proceed far without making some mistakes.

So we cannot avoid all indeliberate venial sins a long time together, unless God give us an extraordinary grace to do so.

But with the ordinary grace of God a virtuous person may avoid all deliberate venial sins. For this purpose we must first of all convince ourselves of the great evil contained in every wilful offense of God; for by such offense a poor mortal puts his will above the will of his Creator and Lord. This evil is so great that no creature, nor even all creatures united, could by their own power fully atone for it.

This becomes more evident when we consider some examples of the severe punishments inflicted by the Lord on those guilty of such offences. Thus when King David had committed an act of vanity by ordering an enumeration of all his subjects to see how great a monarch he had become, which seems to have been only a venial sin, the Lord sent to him the prophet Gad, to give him the choice between three punishments, namely three years of famine, three months of flight before his enemies or three days of pestilence on his people. He chose the pestilence, and it carried off seventy thousand men (I Paral. xxi).

Moses for a venial fault was refused the honor of leading the Chosen People into the promised land, which would have been a fitting crown of all his labors. His sister Mary, for some murmuring against her brother, was stricken with a leprosy and humiliated before all the people. In fact, leprosy is a striking figure of the effect of venial sin on the soul; for it disfigures the soul without depriving it of life. If a visible leprosy were usually the effect of wilful venial sin, men would be as anxious to avoid such an evil as they are now to escape that bodily plague.

Then there are the pains of Purgatory to be considered, which are deserved by venial sins; they are worse than any pain known to us in this life. For, as St. Thomas remarks, they are different in kind: the fire of Purgatory is not created for the service and comfort of man, but for his punishment and torture. The examples of its duration which have been made known by revelations to saintly souls are proofs of the terrible evil such offences are in the sight of the just, all-holy God. Father Faber, in his "All for Jesus" says: "In the revelations of Sister Frances of Pampeluna, we find that, among some hundreds of cases, by far the greater majority suffered 30, 40 or 60 years" (pp. 394, 395).

There results besides from venial sins a still worse consequence than any transitory suffering, namely that they expose us to the danger of committing mortal sins and losing our soul for eternity. This happens in two ways, naturally and supernaturally.

1. It is *natural* for man, when he does a good or a

bad act, to become thereby more inclined to do the same again under similar influences and circumstances; thus habits are contracted of virtue and vice. The commission of venial sins therefore inclines the soul to sin more readily thereafter, and to sin, not only oftener, but also more grievously; and thus venial often lead to mortal sins. This is not theory only, but the teaching of constant experience. For instance, a religious has acquired great purity of conscience, he is a model of modesty; but he begins to neglect his rules, he gets accustomed to glance rather freely at indelicate objects, he becomes habituated to indulge his curiosity. Still he would shrink from anything impure. But his imagination becomes more indelicate, his passions less restrained, wilful venial sins multiply and grievous falls may follow sooner than he expected. Mortal sins themselves may become habitual, and who can tell where the evil will end? Even if only one mortal sin were thus brought about, the evil is the greatest of misfortunes. But this growing habit is likely to get still worse.

2. *Supernaturally* a similar process is going on. By every act of virtue we obtain, along with the merit, additional actual grace to merit more; but when we sin, we fail to obtain this new accession of grace; and thus it becomes less likely that we shall do better next time. We may thus lose more and more grace by repeated venial faults; and in face of an unusually strong temptation, we may be so weak as to yield assent. No one becomes very bad on a sudden; but many gradually lose their virtue and become reprobates. History

is full of such examples, and daily experience ought to be a constant warning against such danger.

But even if there were no danger of mortal sin (which is, of course, a false supposition) a religious has a special reason to avoid all deliberate sin in the fact that he has been made a favorite disciple of the Blessed Saviour. When he wantonly offends the Lord, he deserves to some extent the reproach originally addressed to the Chosen People, and afterwards applied to Judas: "If my enemy had reviled me, I would verily have borne with it. And if he that hated me had spoken great things against me, I would perhaps have hidden myself from him. But thou a man of one mind, my guide and my familiar, who didst take sweetmeats together with me; in the house of the Lord we walked with consent" (Ps. 54). We would not willingly grieve or insult a friend; and is not Jesus our dearest and most devoted friend? Certainly it ought to be one of the principal resolutions of the retreat to strive earnestly and unceasingly to avoid all deliberate sins.

### THE THIRD MEDITATION

#### TO EXCITE PERFECT CONTRITION

It is highly proper that we should not conclude this first part of the retreat without striving earnestly to arouse within our hearts a deep sorrow for all our sins, and that for the most perfect of motives, namely because by them we have offended God, who is infinitely good in Himself and infinitely bountiful to us. For



this purpose we are going to spend this hour of meditation in considering various manifestations of the Divine goodness.

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you behold the return of the Prodigal Son, whom his aged father clasps most affectionately to his heart.

*2nd Prelude.* Ask earnestly for an intense love of God and a perfect contrition for all your sins.

*POINT I.* Consider the parable of the Prodigal Son, in which the Lord Jesus Himself has given us a most striking picture of the goodness of our Heavenly Father. We may read to advantage the whole parable (St. Luke xv, 11, etc.), but chiefly xv, 20-24: "And rising up he came to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion; and running to him fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son. And the father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry; because this my son was dead and is come to life again, was lost and is found; and they began to make merry."

Not a word of reproach, no limit to the pardon, only expressions of happiness, and solicitude to restore the boy's honor. Thus does God act with sincere penitents.

*POINT II.* As the feast prepared is to-morrow's



Holy Communion, we will consider in the next place how Christ *prepared* His Apostles for their Communion. "Before the festival day of the Pasch, Jesus knowing that his hour was come, and that he should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

"And when supper was done—he rises from supper, and layeth aside his garments and having taken a towel, girdeth himself, etc." (St. John xiii, 1–5).

The washing of the feet is the image of the Sacrament of Penance, in which Christ washes away our sins in His sacred blood. What a wonderful invention of His infinite love: And how we ought to love Him, in return, instead of offending Him by sin. Elicit an act of contrition.

*POINT III.* Consider that other manifestation of Divine love, the institution of the Blessed Sacrament: "Whilst they were at supper Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to his disciples, and said: Take ye and eat, this is my body. And taking the chalice, he gave thanks, and gave to them saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins" (St. Matth. xxvi, 26–28).

Could we conceive any greater love than that Christ should feed us with His own sacred body and blood? And yet, when we sin, we turn against Him, as when a serpent bites its benefactor who warms it in his bosom. My God, pardon me! My God, I love Thee above all things! I am most sorry for having offended Thee!

A consoling fact like the following may give us a more sensible appreciation of the favor granted us in the reception of Holy Communion. On All Saints Day, 1612, St. Alphonsus Rodriguez had received the Blessed Sacrament with his brethren, when the good Lord showed him in a sensible manner His presence in the hearts of all those who had just communicated, so that he beheld the Saviour resplendent with glory, whole and entire in each of the religious (Life of Bl. Alph. Rodr. by a Lay-brother, p. 82).

*POINT IV.* Imagine you visit a church or chapel at midnight. Jesus Christ is there then, as at every hour of night and day. He is praying for you to His Heavenly Father, because he loves you, and He knows you need abundant graces to lead a worthy life. It was when Blessed Margaret Mary was adoring Him in her convent chapel that Jesus appeared to her on the altar pointing to His Sacred Heart, and saying: "Behold the Heart that has loved man so much, and I receive nothing but coldness in return." He longs for love; and certainly we did not love Him when we sinned. O my Jesus! I wish to love Thee. I detest my sins.

*Colloquy* with our dear Lord, protesting to Him that I love Him sincerely with my whole heart and soul, that I am most heartily sorry for having offended Him, because He is infinitely amiable, begging that I may love Him more and more.

## THE FOURTH DAY

Now that we have freed our souls from every sinful affection, Christ comes to offer Himself to lead us on, that by following Him we may establish the Kingdom of God in our own souls and in the souls of others. The study of the end of man was the foundation of a good life, the study of the following of Christ is the foundation of a perfect life.

### FIRST MEDITATION

#### THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you see Christ going from town to town, announcing the Kingdom of His Father.

*2nd Prelude.* Ask for grace to understand the call and to follow Him with a generous heart.

*POINT I.* Consider this parable: God has chosen a most noble Catholic prince, endowed with all the virtues that conciliate the esteem and love of every good and brave man; and He has appointed him to put down all the enemies of Christ, to establish the Kingdom of God in all countries, and make the Lord reign supreme over all mankind. He is the greatest of heroes, accomplished in person, magnetic in influence, beyond any mortal that has ever appeared on earth.

This King issues a call to all Catholic warriors (for in this parable only warriors are spoken of) inviting

them to rally under his standard. They are going to fight for the grandest, holiest and dearest of all causes. He promises them certain victory, no one of his followers shall perish unless it be through his own fault. Yet it will be a strenuous campaign, full of hardships and fatigue for all concerned. But the King himself will ever be in the midst of his soldiers, in the thickest of the fight, sharing in their hardships and privations, so that no one will be expected to toil and endure more than the leader; and each one shall share in the victory in proportion to the sacrifices he shall have made in the holy cause.

What should a brave warrior answer to such an appeal? The promises may appear to be excessive, impossible; but they are so in the parable only, not in the real facts figured by it.

*POINT II.* Now consider the application to the reality signified. The Son of God Himself is that King, nobler and grander than any mere human genius or hero, who has truly come into this world to establish the Kingdom of God, and who is accomplishing this appointed task.

He calls upon all men, women and children to follow Him in His contest against God's enemies; not that He needs their aid, but that they may share in the glory of the victory.

For this purpose all must, in some measure, share His labors and His sacrifices; but He will ever be by their side, and endure more than any of them. Every one will share in the magnificent rewards in proportion to his generous exertions.



What answer should every generous heart make to such an appeal from his great, good God, his sovereign Lord and Saviour? "To-day, if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts" exclaims the Psalmist (Ps. 94).

*POINT III.* Those who wish to show greater affection, and to signalize themselves in the King's service, not only will offer their whole persons to labor, but will also act against their own sensuality, and say: "Eternal Lord of all things, I make my oblation with Thy favor and help, in the presence of Thine infinite goodness, and in the sight of Thy glorious Mother, and of all the Angels of Thine Heavenly court, protesting that I wish and desire, and that it is my deliberate determination (provided only it be for Thy greater service and praise) to imitate Thee in bearing all insults and reproaches, and all poverty, as well actual poverty as poverty of spirit, if only Thy Divine Majesty be pleased to choose and receive me to this life and state." As Jesuits, we are certainly called to this close imitation of Christ. We must, not only faithfully resist all temptations to sin, but also generously follow our King in sacrificing lawful pleasures, trampling upon worldly honors, upon self-esteem and bodily comforts, leading mortified lives, as worthy companions of Jesus.

*POINT IV.* That war against Satan and against human depravity has been going on for nineteen centuries. Millions have been following Christ to victory, and are now reigning with Him in Heaven. Our time is come; we too must make our choice. Our King has



said: "He who is not with me is against me," "No man can serve two masters" (St. Matth. vi, 24). Let us offer ourselves to be the generous and faithful followers of our Blessed Saviour, imitating Him on earth that we may follow Him into the glory of Heaven.

What sacrifices in particular can I offer Him?

*Colloquy.* Beg earnestly for light and grace to understand and follow the example of Christ.

## SECOND MEDITATION

### ON THE INCARNATION

Here St. Ignatius begins what he calls the Second Week of his Exercises, in which he bids us study how the great King leads us in the grand enterprise of establishing the Kingdom of His Father, by considering His coming on earth, His nativity, His childhood and His private life. The main purpose all along is to make us know Him more intimately, love Him more ardently and follow Him more faithfully. This following consists in making ourselves more and more like to Him: "Whom he (God) foreknew he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son" (Rom. viii, 29). By this conformity to Christ we make God reign in our hearts and prepare ourselves to enter into His Heavenly Kingdom.

In this and the following exercises a change is made in the process so far followed; namely, instead of recalling the facts to memory in the body of the meditation, we now recall them in a special prelude, put before the two usual ones. Then in the points we do less

reasoning; we rather look on and behold the event as it were passing before our eyes, noticing in particular the persons, their words and their actions, and dwelling on the thoughts and the sentiments which they suggest to our minds. From the fact that we behold rather than reason, these exercises are usually called *contemplations*, rather than *meditations*, though the name is of little importance, provided the process be well understood.

*1st Prelude.* Recall the facts to mind, as they are related by St. Luke (i, 26-38).

*2nd Prelude.* Imagine you see the face of the earth, as it was at that time, inhabited by diverse races of men, civilized and barbarian, all steeped in vice and rushing on, a vast torrent, into the abyss of Hell. In the little town of Nazareth the Virgin Mary at prayer, and God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost looking down from Heaven upon the varied scene.

*3rd Prelude.* Beg fervently that you may understand this mystery, and may learn from it to know your King, Christ, more clearly, love Him more ardently and follow Him more faithfully.

*POINT I.* Study the scene as it was before the descent of the Angel, noticing the persons, with their words and actions.

1. *The human race*, in a great variety of conditions: some rich, others poor; some learned, others ignorant; some refined, others rude; some suffering, others rejoicing; talking of wars and of pleasure, adoring idols; but nearly all rushing on, like a vast torrent, into Hell.

2. Then consider the *chaste Virgin Mary*, praying for the coming of the Messiah, lowering herself in her own mind, thinking of her littleness before God. Thus the poet tells of a drop of water saying to itself: "how little I am in the vast ocean around me;" and at that moment a shellfish swallowed the drop, and it lay hardening in the shell, and it became the choicest pearl that ever shone on a queenly diadem. So was Mary chosen in her humility.

3. Consider the *three Divine Persons* looking down from Heaven upon the scene below, seeing the mass of moral corruption, yet, instead of sending down avenging fire or a new deluge of water to punish the guilty race, pitying its sad condition. The Son of God steps down from His throne, and casts Himself at the feet of His Heavenly Father, offering Himself to assume our mortal nature and to atone for our sins.

Here is the first step of our King, lowering Himself: *Exinanivit semetipsum*: "He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man" (Phil. ii, 7). We are to imitate Him, to be made like to Him. This is our first lesson; let us learn it well: we must be humble.

*POINT II.* The Angel Gabriel is sent to Mary to announce her selection as the Mother of God. He comes, not to the mighty city of Rome, to its gilt palaces and learned scholars; the things of earth are very small in the sight of God. He comes to an unknown little town in a despised country, to a poor maiden, unknown to the world.

*Listen to the words spoken:* "Hail, full of grace,

the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women." Mary is too humble to realize that such words could be suitable to her: "She was troubled at his saying." But the Angel explains and dispels her fear. He adds: "Thou shalt conceive in thy womb and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the most High." Now her Virgin heart is alarmed; so precious is the jewel of virginity in her sight. "How shall this be done, because I know not man? And the Angel answering said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Thus reassured, she understands that such is the will of God; her answer beautifully expresses her humility: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word." She does not say: behold then the future queen of Heaven and earth, but the handmaid of the Lord. Jesus has associated her with Himself making her, here and all through life, the model of every virtue.

Her example is like that of the Redeemer: humility, humility.

*POINT III.* After her consent had thus been expressed, God, who always respects the free will of men, formed in her womb, from her virgin blood, the body of her Divine Son: "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (St. John i, 14). As when he formed the body of Adam out of the slime of the earth, He breathed into his face the breath of life; so



now He created the soul of Christ, and united it at once with the embryonic body to build it up to the perfection of manhood, and at the same moment God the Son assumed this humanity into substantial union with His Divine Person.

This is the second step in the career of our King, again a species of self-annihilation: *Exinanivit semetipsum*. It is also an example of His love for men, of His boundless zeal for their salvation and glorification. He stooped down to earth in order to raise man to Heaven.

*Colloquy* with the Lord incarnate:—gratitude, love; promise to follow Him, to humble self, to labor for the good of souls. Ask for the help of Mary. Our Father—Hail Mary.

## CONSIDERATION

### ON THE IMITATION OF CHRIST

The main truth that St. Ignatius inculcates, both in the meditation on the Kingdom of Christ and in all the subsequent portions of his Exercises, is that man must be perfected by imitating Christ, by making himself like to the Son of God made man, according to the words of St. Paul: “Whom God foreknew he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren” (Rom. viii, 29).

The intense love of God, which the Saint conceived during his retreat at Manresa, prompted him to make himself as like to Christ as, with God’s grace, was pos-



sible; and the zeal for the salvation of souls, which he learned from the example of Christ, urged him to form a band of men like to himself, or rather like to the God-man, a select band to be, as it were, a body-guard of the Divine King in the holy warfare, undertaken to establish the Kingdom of God. This is the spirit of the Society of Jesus, and of all religious Orders, and to some extent of all who wish to attain perfection. For this purpose the principal means to be used is the study of the life of Christ, which is to be the chief occupation of the exercitant during this and the following days. It is not a work of human skill, but one of the direct influence of the Holy Spirit; He alone can produce in the heart of man the supernatural likeness to the Son of God. As He sanctified St. Ignatius, so He sanctifies all those who faithfully and generously perform these exercises. ·

We may, in some respects, compare the process of sanctification to the work of a painter who produces an exquisite likeness of a distinguished personage on his canvas. The first outlines of the supernatural likeness of a child of men to the Son of God are traced by the Divine Artist in the Sacrament of Baptism. The infant's soul receives the precious impress as the unconscious canvas receives the colors, without its own co-operation. Yet already then the difference is immense between a mere child of earth and an adopted child of God. But very much remains to be accomplished by the Holy Ghost before the likeness is perfected. And this increase of sanctification is the most important work that is being done on earth from gen-

eration to generation: "For the perfecting of the Saints—for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv, 12).

Most of this further sanctification is to be produced by the Holy Ghost in our hearts with our co-operation: He teaches us how to *make ourselves* like to Christ, while He aids us to do it. For His teaching does not consist in simply suggesting to us what we must do, as we teach a child its Catechism; but He acts as does a music teacher with his pupils, who makes them constantly practise what they are learning. It is by their own efforts that they are to acquire the art. So the Spirit of God makes us like unto Christ by helping us to act as Christ did, to practise the virtues of which He has given us the example. In this consists the sanctification of the soul, in the imitation of Christ.

How Christ acted during His whole career, from His incarnation to His ascension, this is the study of the second, third and fourth weeks of the Exercises. We will here call attention to some of the characteristic traits of His life on earth.

1. His conduct was diametrically opposed to that by which Adam and Eve had forfeited their original happiness. They had aspired to rise above their own condition and become like unto God. For the Devil had said: "God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. iii, 5). Christ, on the contrary, while being God, stooped down and made Himself man; and He continued lowering Himself more and more, becoming the

poorest child on earth, born in a stable, laid upon straw, "a worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people" (Ps. 21), condemned to a shameful death, and, as a criminal, crucified with thieves. If then we wish to be like Christ, we must practise humility.

2. Another characteristic trait of Christ's conduct is seen in the means He used to establish the Kingdom of His Father. He could have made the colossal power of Rome His tool to effect that purpose, or have employed the wisdom of the philosophers or the elegance of the writers of that classic age. But instead He used ignorant and timid men, and first gathered into His fold the poor and despised of the earth, as St. Paul expressed it: "For see your vocation, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen that he may confound the wise, and the weak things of the world hath God chosen that he may confound the strong, and the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and things that are not, that He might bring to naught things that are, that no flesh should glory in His sight (I Cor. i, 26-29).

Must we then, to imitate Christ, cast all human learning to the winds? By no means; but we must understand that merely natural means cannot produce supernatural effects, that all the learning and all the power of the world cannot save or sanctify a soul. And therefore we must trust in supernatural means.

As to the natural means, Christ did not need them to accomplish His purpose; but we must use all the means, natural and supernatural, that God puts at our disposal; yet remembering all along that we must put our main confidence in the supernatural, in the help of grace, which is secured by the imitation of our King.

We must then ever keep our eyes upon Him, study His example, and reproduce His virtues in ourselves. It will often happen that to act thus we must do things which seem foolish in the eyes of a worldly wisdom, as when St. Francis Borgia resigned his office of viceroy, in which he was doing so much good, to hide himself in the religious state; or when the Seven Holy Founders of the Servites of Mary gave up all their riches to become poor like Christ.

A beautiful illustration of the way in which we are to imitate the Saviour is given us in the Book of Judges, where Gedeon and his three hundred followers rescued their people from oppression by means apparently most unwise, yet fully successful because they obeyed God with heroic fidelity. Gedeon was designed by Divine Providence to be a type of Christ. Jesus is our Gedeon, and we can learn how we must follow Him by studying the story of Gedeon in Holy Writ.

The Israelites in his day had been conquered by the Madianites and Amalekites, who were overrunning their land with a countless army, and destroying all they could not carry off. The Chosen People were reduced to a state of slavery and starvation. So they repented of their idolatry, and called upon the Lord for



pardon and mercy. God sent them a savior in the person of the faithful Gedeon. This hero, encouraged by miracles, which he had seen, destroyed the altar and the grove of Baal, and then gathered together 32,000 men, trusting in God that with this small force he could defeat the vast number of the foes. But God told him his followers were too many; if they conquered, they would attribute the victory to their own prowess. He bade him choose only 300 of them, and promised Gedeon that with these alone he would gain a complete victory.

Now notice how this was accomplished; it was by means apparently most rash and foolish. The Scripture narrates it thus: "Gedeon divided the 300 men into three parts, and gave them trumpets in their hands, and empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers. And he said to them: I will go into one part of the camp, and *do you as I shall do*. When the trumpet shall sound, in my hand, blow you also the trumpets on every side of the camp.—They began to sound their trumpets, and clap the pitchers one against another—And they cried out, The sword of the Lord and of Gedeon—And the Lord sent the sword into all the camp and they killed one another" (Judges vii, 16–22).

The immense army of the foe was destroyed, and the country delivered by the 300 unarmed men. These had simply done what they saw their leader do, and God had done the rest. Christ is our Gedeon; we must simply do what He did, and God will do the rest: He will establish His Kingdom in our hearts, and by



us, no matter how weak the instruments, effect the salvation of souls.

### THIRD MEDITATION

#### ON THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

*1st Prelude.* Recall the facts to mind, by reading St. Luke i, 1-20.

*2nd Prelude.* See the stable, with the Divine Infant lying on the straw in the manger, with Mary and Joseph kneeling in adoration.

*3rd Prelude.* Ask to understand how Christ has loved you, that you may love Him ardently and follow Him faithfully.

*POINT I.* Consider how Mary and Joseph received the order to go from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be enrolled there. Notice the persons, their words and their actions.

1. *The pagan emperor* who ordered the census, no matter what was his motive, was an agent of Divine Providence to bring the Holy Family to Bethlehem. His order had been issued three years before; it arrived at Nazareth just at the right time for God's purposes.

2. *St. Joseph* brings it home, knowing what inconvenience it would cause, but resigned to God's will.

3. *Mary*, though she sees it comes at a most inopportune time, as far as man can judge, has only words and thoughts of cheerful submission to the voice of authority. Both prepare at once for the journey, and start as soon as possible.

*POINT II.* See the Holy Family arriving in Beth-

*lehem.* They have traveled five days, over 110 miles, Mary perhaps riding on an ass or in a rude cart, and Joseph leading the animal. Both now are dust begrimed and tired out, glad to get at last to the one inn of the town; but they are disappointed and find no room there to receive them. Follow them in imagination as they wander through the poorer streets, asking here and there for a night's lodging, but refused at every door. Here now are the holiest persons that ever trod the earth, and see how the Lord allows them to suffer for our example of patience. And the Divine Child, how helpless: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (St. John i, 11). Happy they, if any such there were, who spoke a kind word to them, even a word of excuse for a refusal; it must have brought a blessing. Do I always speak kindly to the poor? Do I render every service I can? God willed it all, that Jesus might be born in a stable, rather than in a comfortable cottage; laid on straw, rather than on a cushion. Our edification is all the greater on Christmas day. But their lot was hard. So too our sufferings shall be turned into joy.

*POINT III.* Behold the stable, in which they have found a refuge. Cattle were there before them, and the floor is littered with their leavings. Mary and Joseph patiently tidy up a spot where they may rest, and collect the cleanest blades of straw to lay them in the manger, provident for the expected birth of the Divine Child.

There, during the night, Mary is miraculously delivered, and in an ecstasy of love and joy, presses the

Son of God to her maternal breast. She tenderly wraps Him in the swaddling clothes she has brought along for the purpose, and reposes Him upon the straw of the manger, that she and Joseph may kneel before Him in humble adoration. Angels are there of course to honor the King of glory; but they appear not to the sight nor charm the ear with their Heavenly song, that all may be as desolate as possible. He came to share our poverty and our loneliness.

Meanwhile His glory is beginning to be manifested elsewhere. For a bright angel announces to the shepherds the birth of a "Saviour, who is Christ the Lord in the city of David," and he adds: "This shall be a sign unto you; you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will" (St. Luke ii, 11-14).

He who came to assume our poverty made the poor His favorites; to them He was first revealed. If we wish to enjoy His favors, let us be satisfied with little, study rather with how little we can get along than how much we can acquire. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (St. Matth. v, 3).

The closest followers of Christ are known by their resemblance to Him. And how is He known? The Angel has proclaimed it: by His poverty: "And this shall be a sign unto you; you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger."

*Colloquy* with the Divine Infant, loving Him, thanking Him, begging for the spirit of poverty, humility; and with Mary and Joseph, begging of them to obtain for me these precious dispositions.



## THE FIFTH DAY

### THE FIRST MEDITATION

#### ON THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

*1st Prelude.* Recall the facts, as narrated by St. Matthew ii, 13-19.

*2nd Prelude.* See St. Joseph quietly asleep in the night, and the Angel standing before him to deliver his message.

*3rd Prelude.* Ask the grace to understand the lessons taught in this mystery by Jesus, Mary and Joseph, so as to know your King more intimately, love Him more ardently and follow Him more faithfully.

*Point I. Consider the message of the Angel,* noticing particularly the persons, their words and their actions.

1. *The persons.* The Angel is a faithful messenger, a model of exactitude when a task is entrusted to us. He addresses Joseph because he is the head of the family. So God usually directs us through our superiors, even if these should be less able, even as Joseph was less gifted than the others. Jesus and Mary are not visited: "Take the child and his mother."

2. Consider the *words* spoken: "Arise and take the child and his mother, and fly into Egypt, and be there until I shall tell thee; for it will come to pass that

Herod will seek the child to destroy him." The action required implies many great difficulties; first a very long journey of hundreds of miles, and that through a wild country, where savage animals and robbers roamed. The parable of the Good Samaritan shows that robbers infested those regions, and the watch kept by the shepherds points to the presence of wolves, bears, etc. Then they are to leave at once, with no provisions for so long a journey: "Arise, and take, etc." They are not even to say a kind farewell to the neighbors who had befriended them, but must leave in secret like criminals. And the motive assigned by the Angel is unsatisfactory to human reason: "Herod will seek the child to destroy him." Were there not a thousand easier ways to prevent this? Was not God wise and powerful enough to save His Divine Son in Bethlehem? Or could they not have gone to Mary's cousin Elizabeth, where young John the Baptist was living in security? Perhaps we might have been self-opiniated enough to find such objections; but Jesus, Mary and Joseph did not criticize.

3. *The Actions* of these exhibit a prompt, cheerful and perfect obedience. These are our models. Have we always acted thus? Is it our habit now to do so?

*POINT II. Consider the exile itself.* How the Holy Family was supported during the many weeks their travel must have lasted, we cannot imagine. They may have suffered many severe hardships; most probably they did, since Christ had come to give the example of patience under sufferings. But God's Providence watched over every step of theirs, and

supplied all their wants as far as was conformable to His designs.

He did not do so only on account of their privileged personalities, but He ever does the same for all who trust in Him. "I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on—for after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek you therefore first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matth. vi, 25-33).

We can especially trust in God's assistance when we are obeying His commands, as was the Holy Family at that time. Therefore we should love to be directed by our superiors, who make known God's will to us. And again, works done under obedience with a willing mind have a special blessing on them. "An obedient man shall speak of victory" (Prov. xxi, 28). The heroic virtues practised in later ages by the solitaries in those deserts may well have been the fruit of the obedience then practised by the Holy Family.

Their stay in Egypt for several years among strangers is best appreciated by those persons who have themselves experienced the bitterness of exile. Christ knew that many of His followers would endure those ills, and He wished to leave them a most consoling example.

*POINT III. Consider the massacre of the Innocents.* All its cruelty was meant for Christ, and cruel persecution has been continued against His followers throughout the ages, and is so to the present day. He

had foretold it: "The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his lord. If they have called the good-man of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household" (St. Matth. x, 24-25). We must then be patient under any kind of molestation, though of course we may use all honest means to prevent it.

The persecution works the good of them who properly endure it. See this exemplified in the massacre of the innocents. It was very wickedly done, a cruel injustice and bitter suffering to the little ones, and a still more dreadful affliction to their mothers; but it resulted in eternal glory for the children. When a priest blesses an article of devotion, he makes a cross over it; so the Lord bestows His blessings with a cross. Every sorrow comes from the hand of our loving Lord, and is meant for the good of those who love Him: "To them that love God all things work together unto good" (Rom. viii, 28).

*Colloquy.* With Jesus and Mary, begging for constant fidelity in the imitation of my Divine Model amid all trials, with a firm confidence in His loving providence: "Know ye that no one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded" (Ecclus. ii, 11).

## THE SECOND MEDITATION

### ON THE PRIVATE LIFE OF CHRIST

*1st Prelude.* Recall the few verses in which Holy Writ records the history of the eighteen years of Christ's private life, from His loss in the temple to His



entrance on His public life: "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men" (St. Luke ii, 51-52), "Is not this the carpenter's son?" (St. Matth. xiii, 55).

*2nd Prelude.* Imagine you see the modest cottage of the Holy Family at Nazareth, where Mary is preparing a meal, while Joseph and the youthful Saviour are working in the adjacent carpenter shop.

*3rd Prelude.* Ask grace to understand the wonderful lessons of sanctity here taught, and to grow in the love and imitation of your Redeemer.

*POINT I.* Consider the words: "*He went down with them and came to Nazareth.*" He might have moved in the midst of the world, as He had done for three days when lost in Jerusalem, but He wished to give an example which people generally could imitate. Nearly all persons must lead a private life during the greater portion, if not the whole of their career. Restlessness to be abroad is very injurious to virtue. But the inner life, needed to attain perfection, is favored by retirement from the world. Hence all founders of religious orders require a retired novitiate, and the Church strictly prescribes enclosure, which law has not been relaxed except where charity to the neighbor demands it. It is not the spirit of God that makes some priests aspire to conspicuous offices and functions. Nazareth was good enough for Chirst, though it was so obscure a town that Nathanael asked, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" (St. John i, 46). It is a



bad sign when a religious is displeased because applied to obscure duties.

*POINT II.* Consider the words, "*And He was subject to them*"; that is, Jesus was subject to Mary and Joseph. This is the chief lesson Christ chose to teach the world during the first thirty years of His life. It must then be of the utmost importance. St. Gregory says of it: "Obedience is a virtue which, by itself alone, plants all other virtues in the mind and preserves them after they are once planted" (L. 35 Mor. c. 10). St. Ignatius, in his "Epistle on Obedience," quoted these words with emphatic approbation; and he has made this the characteristic virtue of his Society. In fact the vow of obedience belongs to the essence of the religious life, and some orders comprise all the obligation of their members under the one vow of "obedience according to their rule." My perfection as a religious depends chiefly on the perfection of my obedience.

Consider besides, in meditating on Christ's private life, who was the Person that obeyed; namely God Himself in His human nature. Whom did He obey? His own creatures infinitely beneath Him in every respect. In what did He obey?

In all the details of His life; in working for instance, under the direction of Joseph, after the unskilful manner of that time. How perfectly do I obey my superiors? I must make myself like unto Christ, not in working miracles, but in submitting to my superiors.

*POINT III.* *Christ spent His private life in humble labor.* Such a career is intended by the Lord for the vast majority of mankind. It is the sentence pro-

nounced upon our race: "In the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken" (Gen. iii, 19). Such labor fosters devotion. It has always been fondly cherished in learned religious bodies. During his voyage to India which lasted thirteen months, St. Francis Xavier used to wash his soiled linen in the sight of his fellow-passengers, while bearing the dignity of Apostolic Nuncio, and he would never consent to be waited on by others (Life, Bartholi and Maffei, p. 74).

*POINT IV. "And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men."* It is by the faithful and steady exercise of the virtues taught by our Divine model that Christians ever grow in sanctity; for sanctity consists in this. And thus there are thousands to-day, as in every period of the Church, of whom it can be said with truth, as is here said of the Blessed Saviour, that they are growing in wisdom as they are advancing in age; and as a consequence they grow in grace with God; and meanwhile they also become daily more perfect subjects of edification to their fellow-men.

That young religious are expected to resemble Christ in steady progress in virtue is of course understood by all. But this should not be confined to young religious. Older religious must persevere in this imitation of Christ; their own welfare requires it, and the welfare of the younger generation, who are naturally much influenced by the example of their elders. All who profess to follow Christ should therefore grow constantly in wisdom and obedience, in humility and gener-

osity, in charity and devotion, and in all the virtues, of which He has given such bright examples.

*Colloquy* with our Divine Lord, asking earnestly that we may know Him more intimately, love Him more ardently and follow Him more faithfully; and that we may correct the faults we have discovered in us during this meditation.

## CONSIDERATION

### ON THE IMITATION OF CHRIST'S PRIVATE LIFE

Since most of our progress in virtue is to be effected by our imitation of Christ's private life, it is worth while adding to the meditation we have made on that subject some further appropriate considerations. Let us examine in what exactly lay the excellence of that great model.

#### I

It did not consist in the use of extraordinary austerities, such as were practised by St. John the Baptist, whose holiness was so highly extolled by the Saviour Himself. That would not have been a suitable model of imitation for mankind generally. Christ's sanctity was of course infinitely superior; and it is the pattern on which our virtue must be modeled.

In fact Christ's private life was not distinguished from the common lives of men by unusual bodily hardships. Millions of men and women in our day, and in civilized lands, toil harder and enjoy fewer material comforts than did the Holy Family. See how hard is

the lot of vast numbers of our laboring classes. See them going to their work at early morning, carrying their cold lunches in their baskets, their only support for the toils of the day. Their labor is fatiguing and protracted, often quite exhausting, as is manifested by the bent forms and wasted frames of so many of them. All day they hear rebukes, harsh and gross language; and with their best efforts very many can scarcely earn enough to keep up their strength. And when they return at night, exhausted and begrimed with dirt, they have no comfortable cottage to rest their wearied limbs; only some room in a tenement house, or in a garret or cellar, crowded together with their wives and children, amidst a rude and often vicious crowd of associates. Compared to their life that of the Holy Family was one of decent comfort.

## II

*What then made the life of Christ so very holy and so very meritorious? Especially two qualities.*

I. Of course His Divine Person gave infinite merit to every act performed by Him in His human nature. Now it is a great consolation for us to remember that, by the gracious dispensation of the Lord, we too are children of God, adopted brothers of Christ, as long as we live in the state of grace; and, by the aid of the Holy spirit, who is diffused in our hearts, we can make our acts worthy of supernatural reward. And all this merit keeps on accumulating throughout our conscious life, unless it be lost by mortal sin. Our principal fear



ought ever to be lest we thus foolishly lose it, and our bitterest regret if we have done so.

2. The second source of holiness in Christ was *the perfection of his intention*, ever aiming purely at the glory of His Heavenly Father. This also we can and we ought to imitate, with the help of grace offered us for this purpose. Here lies in fact the principal means of improving our resemblance to Christ. And we can do so constantly, even in our commonest actions, as the Apostle teaches us saying: "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. x, 31).

It is a very appropriate occupation for the time of the yearly retreat to examine carefully to what extent we act habitually for a supernatural intention, one resting on the faith, and not merely directed to some natural advantage. It is the intention that determines the true value of every human act. Whatever is done for some temporal good alone can only claim a temporal reward. What am I habitually working for? Is it only for some material or intellectual success? Or am I actuated to a great extent by a merely natural impulse? Even though such impulse be not sinful, not opposed to reason, still it is so much time and energy wasted on the things of earth, and cannot add to my eternal happiness. To act thus, as far as supernatural reward is concerned, is without result, as one would waste his time and labor who would spend hours in sewing without thread, or writing without ink in his pen.

People do not act so foolishly in the affairs of this life; but very many do so in the things of eternity. Is not a great portion of my own life thus habitually wasted by the want of a supernatural intention? What improvement can I make in this matter?

### III

We are explicitly warned by our Blessed Saviour against *two copious sources of waste of time and labor*.

1. The first regards actions which appear to be very reasonable and virtuous; for instance the exercises of kindness to our friends and relatives, or the practice of any other natural virtues in human intercourse. Of all these Christ said: "If you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you do more? Do not also the heathens this?" (St. Matth. v, 46-47). We ought to love our friends for God's sake.

2. The second source of waste is a very copious one among men, even among religious; namely doing what is quite proper, but only to gain the esteem of others.

This regard for the good opinion of our fellow-men is not sinful in itself, as is erroneously supposed by some pious writers, who would have penitents accuse themselves in Confession of vanity when they have said or done anything to attract favorable attention or gain praise. Every sin is essentially a violation of a law of God. But there is no law of God forbidding us to seek the approbation of sensible persons. Does a boy sin by trying to please his parents? Does a student

sin by trying to gain a prize? Jansenists would think so, but such is not Catholic doctrine.

The desire of praise is a constant encouragement to the practice of the natural virtues. Sin enters when praise is sought for doing what is unreasonable, or when we take all the credit of good conduct to ourselves, forgetting that our very goodness is a gift of God. For this is blamed by St. Paul: "What hast thou that thou hast not received? and if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?" (I Cor. iv, 7). There is unfortunately plenty of sin in the world; but we must avoid increasing it by forming false consciences.

Yet, even when reasonable praise is sought, and no sin committed, there may be great evil in the loss of merit for Heaven; and the imitation of Christ will teach us to avoid that evil. He acted in all things for the glory of His Heavenly Father. "I seek not my own glory," He said to the Jews; and again: "He that sends me is with me,—for I do always the things that please him" (St. John viii, 50, 29). By imitating the Saviour in this, we become more and more like unto Him, and we lay up abundant treasures for Heaven.

But He earnestly warns us not to lose such precious merit, saying: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have reward of your Father, who is in Heaven" (St. Matth. vi, 1). And speaking, in the next verse of the hypocrites who gave alms that they might be seen by men, the Saviour adds: "They have received their reward."

But the loss of supernatural reward is not the only evil resulting from the seeking of human praise; for, though, as we have seen, seeking such honor is not in itself a sin, still it is very often the cause of sin, even of mortal sin. For praise is very apt to affect the mind somewhat as intoxicants affect the body; it arouses an inordinate greed of more and more of the stimulant. The more we get of it, the more are various passions aroused within us, and we are likely to become ambitious of honor and of superiority over others, conceited and contemptuous of others, becoming infatuated with our supposed good qualities; in a word we gradually become proud, and a proud man is an abomination to the Lord, or, as St. Luke expresses it: "That which is high to men is an abomination before God" (xvi, 15).

#### IV

A third cause that made the life of Christ so holy was that *He did everything perfectly well*: "He hath done all things well" (St. Mark vii, 37). Our goodness does not consist so much in what we do as in the manner in which we do it. In fact, during the thirty years of His private life, which we are now studying, Christ did no great things whatever. His occupations were of the humblest kind; millions of men are doing the same day after day; but His actions derived their excellence from the perfection wherewith He did them, and our goodness consists in imitating His perfect manner of acting.

The excellence of a masterpiece in painting and sculpture results from the excellent delicacy and appro-



priateness of every, even the smallest, detail; the beauty of a specimen of good penmanship does not result from bold dashes, but from the perfection of every single letter; and so the excellence of the life of Christ, and the lives of those who wish to become like unto Him, lies not in doing great things, but in doing everything excellently well.

Few of us, if any, have occasion of doing many great things in the course of our life; but we can all, with God's grace, do a multitude of little things well, and thus resemble our Divine model. Our crown in Heaven will not consist of some one or two magnificent jewels, as does the crown of many glorious Martyrs, but of countless little gems, each shining with its own peculiar lustre. These are the lessons we should learn from the private life of the God incarnate.

### THE THIRD MEDITATION

#### ON THE PUBLIC LIFE OF CHRIST

*1st Prelude.* Recall the facts: Christ began His public labors for the salvation of souls by leaving His Blessed Mother, by being baptized among sinners, then fasting forty days. Next He travelled on foot from town to town during three years, in great poverty, through Galilee and Judea; selected ignorant men as His Apostles, instructed them most patiently, and predicted His sacred passion.

*2nd Prelude.* Behold Christ, attended by His Apostles, while He addresses a miscellaneous multitude.

*3rd Prelude.* Ask earnestly that you may learn

from Him an intense zeal for souls and generosity in following His example.

*POINT I.* Consider the grandeur of the work of saving souls. It is the noblest occupation possible, as is expressed in the maxim attributed to St. Dionysius the Areopagite: "The most Divine of all Divine works is the salvation of souls." In fact the saving of one soul is a higher achievement than the creation of the material universe; for the value of an action is properly measured by the result achieved, and a glorified soul is as far above all bodily substances as the knowledge, love and fruition of God is above mere matter. We admire the poet who composes a grand epic, the painter or sculptor who produces a masterpiece of his noble art, the architect who erects an imposing structure, etc.; but what is all this compared to the salvation of a soul, that will be for eternity an ornament of Heaven. To Christ belongs the glory of all salvation of souls, but He deigns to share this glory with His followers, to whom He says: "I have chosen you and have appointed you that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain" (St. John xv, 16).

What a noble object to work for! And while a soul is so precious, its salvation is to be effected in a short time. We may at times achieve this wonderful success in a single hour.

*POINT II.* Consider the example set us by the Son of God to accomplish this purpose: 1. He left His Blessed Mother, and we do not read that He ever returned to her home. This ought to encourage us to make similar sacrifices. 2. He so humbled Himself as

to be baptized among sinners; and, to call down the blessings of Heaven upon His sacred ministry, He spent forty days in fasting and prayer. By all this He taught us that the supernatural work of saving souls is to be accomplished by the supernatural means of humiliations and penance and prayer; mere eloquence and logic are not sufficient. 3. He endured many privations. For during those three years He and His Apostles had not the comforts of a home: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head" (St. Matth. viii, 20). They often spent the night in the open air, for instance in the Garden of Olives. They had no regular supply of food, and must often have endured bitter hunger. St. Matthew narrates an instance: "At that time Jesus went through the corn on the Sabbath; and His disciples being hungry began to pluck the ears and to eat them" (xii, 1). He travelled and taught the people all day and received visitors during the night, like Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who were His disciples secretly for fear of the Jews.

The history of the Saints is full of similar hardships; for they had learned to follow His example. Am I a worthy follower of my King? Do I make generous sacrifices in His service? Frequently the salvation or the loss of a soul depends on the zeal of a priest or religious. Neglect in this matter is often irreparable.

*POINT III.* During His public life Jesus also gave us the example of earnest prayer, in which He would at times spend the entire night. St. Luke writes: "He (Jesus) went out into a mountain to pray, and he

passed the whole night in the prayer of God" (vi, 12). He did not need to pray for His own sake, but He wished to show us by His example the necessity of fervent prayer for those employed in the active duty of saving souls. They need it for themselves and for the good of others. For themselves, because the sacred ministry is full of dangers; it is like striving to save drowning men, in which task those who lend assistance often perish themselves. Sad experience teaches that many priests, employed in constant labors, neglect their own souls, and come to a miserable fall. And as far as the neighbor is concerned, it is the man of prayer, the man of God, that does the work of God, and not the priest of a worldly mind who neglects his prayer.

With what devotion do I offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass? receive Holy Communion? make my meditation? recite the Divine Office? The annual retreat is the time to consider all these things and to provide for improvements.

*Colloquy* with our Dear Lord, praying for an increase of fervor in prayer, of zeal for souls, of generosity in the labors of the ministry.



## THE SIXTH DAY

After we have meditated on the Kingdom of Christ, His self-annihilation, His private life and His zealous labors, we must now consider the plots and efforts of the archenemy Satan, who opposes Him at every point. For life is a continuous warfare: "The life of man upon earth is a warfare," says Job; and in every war there are of course two opposing forces. St. Augustine in his celebrated work on "The City of God," compared together the working of those conflicting powers, the impersonations of virtue and vice, of humility and pride. St. Ignatius here proposes a similar parable, for the purpose of discovering the plots and snares of Satan to ruin souls, contrasting them with Christ's plans and labors to procure their eternal happiness.

### THE FIRST MEDITATION

#### ON THE TWO STANDARDS

*1st Prelude.* The figure under which the two opposing forces are presented by St. Ignatius is that of two armies encamped, the one near Babylon, the city of confusion, as the name signifies; the other near Jerusalem, that sacred city of peace. In the former camp Satan is seen elevated on a throne of fire and smoke, his countenance horrible to behold. He is surrounded

by countless demons, whom he is instructing how to compass the ruin of souls. In the other camp the Blessed Saviour stands humbly in the midst of His followers, Angels and men, His countenance beaming with kindness, while teaching them how to gain all hearts for virtue and happiness.

*2nd Prelude.* Imagine you behold these two camps with their respective leaders.

*3rd Prelude.* Ask for light to understand the treacherous schemes of Satan, that you may oppose them in yourself and in others, and may lead all to obey Christ.

*POINT I.* Study the special features of Satan's camp.

1. It is near Babylon, where the tower of Babel once stood, to signify the pride and the confusion which Satan ever labors to stir up in the hearts of men. He is elevated on a throne, to denote the ambition he arouses in all to rise above their fellows. The throne consists of flames, ever restless, and smoke, darkening the mind of his miserable dupes. His monstrous features reflect the ugly vices of his heart.

2. Listen to his address: "Go into every country, every province, every city, town and hamlet, enter into every house, and tempt every man, woman and child to grasp for the good things of this world. Most of them are easily enticed to the greed of money and riches, the accumulation of which seems to them reasonable and proper.

"When they become rich, tempt them to the ambition of honor, by which they are puffed up with self-esteem

and the spirit of independence of God." This spirit is the very essence of pride, and the subversion of the moral order. The world is full of minds independent of God; they are the conquests of Satan. Beginning with what appears proper enough, they are gradually led to the abyss of sin.

3. The demon understands full well that the temptation is to be adapted to each one's character. With many there is from the beginning an inordinate love of honor and distinction; these may at once be assailed on their weak point and more rapidly led into pride. Others are more readily allured by the bait of pleasure; they may first be tempted by innocent amusements, then by more inordinate enjoyment, till they cast off all restraint, loving self to the contempt of the Creator, which is but another form of pride.

*POINT II.* Now consider the opposing camp.

1. There behold the gentle Saviour, not enthroned, but humbly standing in the midst of His followers, as it were an equal to the least. His serene countenance is lit by a genial smile, inspiring all with love and confidence;

"Beautiful above the sons of men, grace is poured abroad in thy lips—Thou hast loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore God, thy God, hath annointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Ps. 44).

2. Listen to the instructions He gives to His Angels and the human ministers of His mercy. He says: "Go ye into the whole world, to every country, every province, every city, town and hamlet, enter every house, and induce every man, woman, and child to

labor for their eternal happiness, by the practice of self-restraint and moderation in all their desires; let all be satisfied with a decent competency of wealth, detaching their hearts from earthly possessions, so as to acquire poverty of spirit, and to be ready to embrace even actual poverty, if the spirit of God should be pleased to lead them to that perfection. Induce them next to willingness to be slighted, even despised, so as to resemble Me more closely. The result will be true humility, which is the root of all the virtues."

*Colloquy*, first with your Mother Mary, asking her to obtain from her Divine Son, true poverty of spirit, and willingness to become actually poor, if God should wish it. Then ask the Saviour through His love for Mary, as man, to obtain these graces for you from His Heavenly Father. Lastly ask the Father to grant you the same through His love for His Divine Son. This triple colloquy is a powerful prayer.

## THE SECOND MEDITATION

### ON THE THREE DEGREES OF HUMILITY

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you behold Christ, who says to you: "My son, I will now show you the highest point of perfection to which I desire you to aspire for the present."

*2nd Prelude.* Speak, O Lord, Thy servant heareth. Give me the grace of generously complying with Thy invitation.

*POINT I.* *The first degree* of virtue, also called the first degree of humility, consists in such a disposition of



heart, such firm attachment to our good Lord, that nothing in the world, not even the danger of death, can make us even deliberate about committing a mortal sin. This degree is necessary for all men, it is the habitual state of all good Christians. Weakness or passion may sometimes cause them to fall; but they soon rise again, and return to this state of mind. It is in fact simply the application of the words of Christ: "If thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire" (St. Mark ix, 42). Let us thank God that we have attained this degree at least; but let us also consider whether any passion is so unrestrained within us as to expose us to a serious fall. No man is safe as long as he lives; some make a sad failure in the end. They fare like the vessel that came from the New World with loads of gold and silver on board, and was wrecked in sight of the Golden Gate, the harbor of San Francisco, while its sailors were answering the hurrahs of welcome rising from the crowd of spectators on the shore.

*POINT II.* *The second degree* consists in such an habitual state of mind that we would rather do or suffer anything, even rather die, than enter into deliberation about committing even a wilful venial sin. This degree supposes considerable indifference to the good things or the evils of this world. It is the habitual state of fervent religious; they may be surprised into venial sins, but they rarely commit them with full deliberation. Let us try to establish ourselves firmly in this degree; and if we find difficulty in this, let us pray

most earnestly for help, and do ourselves violence. "The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away" (St. Matth. xi, 12). We should not rest satisfied till, by prayer and efforts, we have confirmed ourselves in this degree.

*POINT III.* *The third degree* consists in such devoted attachment to our Blessed Saviour that we wish to be like Him, to be in suffering and forgotten, or even despised by men, as He was; so that, where duty does not require the contrary, we wish, even without a view to any reward, to share His afflictions, for no other reason than because Christ, our dearest friend and Sovereign Lord endured the same.

Thus when a member of a decent family is in a dying condition, all the other members abstain from feasting or attending pleasure parties; so too, because our Lord led a poor and humble life, enduring intense hardships and sufferings, we wish to bear a share in His afflictions.

As an accomplished artist takes great delight in practising his art, in which a beginner finds only labor and difficulties, so those derive most happiness from the practice of virtue who have attained in it uncommon proficiency. The sentiments of this third degree are beautifully expressed in the Prayer of St. Xavier, "O Deus: ego amo te," etc. (page 132).

*The colloquy* is three-fold: 1. Begging the Blessed Virgin to obtain for us from her Divine Son the grace of frequently eliciting acts of this third degree. 2. Begging our Divine Lord to ask this grace for us from His Heavenly Father. 3. Begging our Heavenly

Father to grant us the same, through the love He has for His Divine Son.

## CONSIDERATION

### ON TEMPTATIONS

In the meditation on the Two Standards we studied the manner in which the evil spirit tempts the souls of men, leading them from apparently innocent beginnings to total independence of their Creator. We must now consider the subject of temptations in further detail.

#### I

*Why does the Devil hate men?* Because he hates God, and as he cannot injure God, he wreaks his vengeance on God's images and children. Now man is created in the image of God, and all men are, or at least are destined to be, elevated to the dignity of children of God. Besides, they are intended to occupy in Heaven the thrones which the evil angels have lost. Therefore Satan envies them, and wants to ruin them by every means in his power. The chief means is mortal sin, by which a man joins in with the tempter in rebelling against his Sovereign Lord. If Satan cannot succeed in leading us into mortal sin, he will strive to impair at least the beauty of the soul by venial sin, and worry it to deprive it of the peace of God.

God allows all this to happen that man may be further ennobled by his victories over temptations and be more richly rewarded; also that the power of the Lord may be more and more manifested, when He

enables so weak a being as man to triumph over such powerful spirits. Thus Providence draws good out of evil, and the wisdom, power, and goodness of God are glorified, virtue is perfected in infirmity (II Cor. xii, 9), and the free creature is exalted. This is beautifully explained in the book of Tobias: "Thy counsel is not in man's power. But this every man is sure of that worshippeth thee, that his life, if it be under trial, shall be crowned; and if it be under tribulation it shall be delivered, and if it be under correction, it shall be allowed to come to thy mercy: because after a storm, thou makest a calm, and after tears and weeping thou pourest in joyfulness. Be thy name, O God of Israel, blessed forever" (iii, 20-23).

## II

*All must expect to be tried by temptations;* for the Lord assures us: "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent bear it away" (St. Matth. xi, 12); now our indolence tempts us to shirk this violence. Our Blessed Saviour allowed Himself to be tempted, and we are to be made like unto Him: "The disciple is not above his master" (ib. x, 24). Those who aim at a closer resemblance to their Divine Master must expect to be more violently tempted; and therefore Ecclesiasticus warns us: "Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation. Humble thy heart and endure" (ii, 1). In fact those who please God must be tempted; the two things are inseparable, as the Angel explained to Tobias: "Because thou wast acceptable



to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee" (xii, 13). Read the lives of the Saints, and you will not find one who had not to endure severe temptations, from St. Paul and the other Apostles down to the latest Saint.

### III

*God will not allow us to be tempted above our strength*, as He has graciously promised through St. Paul, who writes: "God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue that you may be able to bear it" (I Cor. x, 13). This truth is strikingly illustrated by the history of Job, which is graphically told thus, in poetic language: "On a certain day, when the sons of God came to stand before the Lord, Satan also was present among them. And the Lord said to him: Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a simple and upright man, and fearing God and avoiding evil? And Satan answering said: Does Job fear God in vain? Hast thou not made a fence for him and his house, and all his substance round about, blessed the work of his hands, and his possession hath increased on the earth? But stretch forth thy hand a little, and touch all that he hath, and see if he blesseth thee not to thy face. Then the Lord said to Satan: Behold all that he hath is in thy hand, only put not forth thy hand upon his person." He thus allowed Satan to deprive Job of his possessions, but not to go any further. We all know how Satan carried out this permission to the letter, and

took away in one day all that Job enjoyed, his sons and daughters included, so that he exclaimed: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither, the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; as it hath pleased to the Lord so it is done," and he added with perfect resignation: "Blessed be the name of the Lord" (i, 6-22). Next, Satan obtains power from God to afflict Job in his health, yet so as to spare his life; God controls all. "So Satan went forth from the face of the Lord, and struck Job with a very grievous ulcer, from the sole of the foot to the top of his head. And he took a potsherd, and scraped the corrupt matter, sitting on a dunghill. And his wife said to him: Dost thou still continue in thy simplicity? bless God and die, and he said to her: Thou hast spoken like one of the foolish women: if we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil? In all these things Job did not sin with his lips" (ii, 7, 8.).

Such is the grand example of patience that Job gave for all subsequent ages. After his trials were ended, the Lord rewarded him abundantly in his wealth and in the excellence of his later children; "and Job lived after these things a hundred and forty years, and he saw his children and his children's children unto the fourth generation, and he died an old man and full of years." In the New Law, in which we live, the rewards of patience are far more precious than those here mentioned in the case of Job; for "The sufferings of this time," says St. Paul, "are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come that shall be revealed in

us" (Rom. viii, 18). And St. James writes: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptations; for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life which God hath promised to them that love Him" (i, 12).

## IV

We must remember, however, that *not all our temptations are from the evil spirit*. He is wicked enough to cause them all; but he need not do so. Of course they never come from God; for St. James says: "Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God; for God is not a tempter of evils, and He tempts no man. But every man is tempted by his own concupiscence, being drawn away and allured" (i, 13-14).

As concupiscence belongs to our fallen nature, it cannot be altogether suppressed; but its power can be very much increased or diminished; and therefore the temptations it causes are to a considerable extent under our own control. If a St. Aloysius, a St. Stanislaus and many other chaste youths scarcely felt any rebellions of the flesh, it was due in great part to the care with which they had from their early childhood guarded the gates of their senses, their eyes, their ears, their touch; and instead of flattering them, they had constantly mortified them in various ways. On the other hand, very many persons allow themselves liberties of an indelicate nature; these need not wonder why they find it so difficult to lead chaste lives.

However, even the most mortified souls may be severely tempted to carnal sins; thus we read of St.

Anthony, that, even in his frightful desert, he was one day assailed by such temptations; and when the victory was won, he exclaimed: Lord where wast Thou when those vile images beset my mind? And the Lord answered him: Anthony, I was in the midst of your heart. But the danger of the sin is certainly much greater when a person is, partly at least, the cause of such disorderly affections, when he heaps fuel on the fire of concupiscence.

It is well to ask oneself in a retreat: have I anything to reproach myself with in this respect? How do I habitually observe modesty of the eyes in public and in private? Is my reading always proper and prudent? Do I ever indulge indolence or excessive softness? am I perfectly temperate in food and drink, and thus cautious not to arouse dangerous passions? It is necessary to ask the Lord frequently and fervently: "Lead us not into temptation"; but this will be of little avail if we bring on temptations by our own laxity or imprudence.

## THE THIRD MEDITATION

### ON THE THREE CLASSES OF MEN

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you behold Christ before you, looking kindly upon you, and saying: "My son, give me thy heart" (Prov. xxxiii).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask fervently for light to understand this gracious invitation, and strength to comply with it generously.

*POINT I.* While this invitation is really addressed



by our loving Lord to every man, consider how differently it is responded to by various classes of men.

*The first class*, which unfortunately is very numerous, turn a deaf ear to this appeal. They are so taken up with the vanities or the pleasures of the world, with the pursuit of riches or honor or friendships, that they do not even stop to consider the call of grace. The turmoil of their passions drowns the still voice of conscience, and they rush on to the yawning abyss of eternal loss. Let me thank the Lord that He has prevented me by His loving care from running along in this mad career.

*POINT II.* The second class of men listen to the Divine call, appreciate its infinite condescension, fly from the allurements of the grossest vices, and give their hearts to their Sovereign Master. Yet they do not give their whole heart. A part of it is occupied by some cherished creature, which they will not sacrifice to their loving Lord. We read that when St. Sebastian was trying to convert a Roman nobleman, named Croatius, he promised him a cure from a painful disease as soon as he should receive Baptism; for Sebastian worked many miracles. But he required as a necessary condition that Croatius should destroy all the idols he had in his house. After the Baptism the convert complained that his sickness was not removed. It was found that he had not destroyed one little idol of gold, an old heirloom in the family; and only after this also was given up was the cure obtained. Thus very many souls are kept back from perfection by some cherished idol which they hesitate to resign.

In the world some men are estimable citizens, honest, charitable, but neglectful of religious duties; others are even practical Catholics, except that they neglect Confession. All such are in evident danger of dying in their sins and being lost forever; but passion blinds them to their terrible danger. Among religious no great vice is common, but many are held back from attaining perfection by some human attachment, or by some evil habit, which they refuse, or hesitate to abandon altogether.

Is there any sacrifice that I know, or at least suspect, my dear Lord asks of me? Is there any practice or habit of mine that may not please Him? If a sculptor, carving an elegant statue, would find a flaw in the marble that would disfigure the countenance, he might have to reject that stone and choose another. The Divine Artist is forming my soul into an image of Christ; happily, if He finds a flaw in my soul, He can remove it, but He will not do so without my consent; or rather He will not remove it Himself, but aid me to remove it. Is there such a flaw? Are there perhaps more than one? Speak, O Lord, Thy servant heareth.

*POINT III.* *The third class of men* to whom the Lord says, "Son, give me thy heart," answer promptly and generously: "O Lord! I wish to be all thine"; "For what have I in Heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth? For Thee my flesh and my heart hath fainted away; Thou art the God of my heart, and the God that is my portion forever" (Ps. 72). But of course virtue does not consist in fine sentiments alone. Docile to the invitation of Christ, we must so

give Him our hearts that we are willing to satisfy all His desires. "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me?" (Ps. 115).

I am now come to the end of the second week of the Exercises. Its main purpose was the study of Christ's private and public life, so as to make myself like unto Him. This therefore is the proper time to examine whether there is any trait of my Divine model which I am not yet determined to reproduce in my own soul.

Here St. Ignatius introduces the election of a state of life for those who have not yet entered on a permanent career; and from those who have he expects a reformation of life. Now this is best accomplished by comparing our own hearts with that of our Divine pattern, taking most generous resolutions to remove all flaws and supply all deficiencies.

*Colloquy.* O my dear Mother Mary! I beg of thee to obtain for me from thy Divine Son the grace of following His example in the practice of all the virtues, doing whatever He may desire of me and that at any sacrifice. Oh, dearest Lord! by Thy love for Thy Blessed Mother, obtain for me, this precious grace from Thy Heavenly Father. And Thou, my Supreme Lord and Master, God the Father, grant me this entire devotedness at the prayer of Thy Divine Son.

## THE SEVENTH DAY

Here we begin the Third Week of St. Ignatius' Exercises; it is devoted to the consideration of Christ's sacred passion. These meditations, or contemplations, are a tribute of love that we offer to our dear Lord; and they are suggestive to ourselves of generous sentiments, and earnest resolutions to practise even heroic virtue, in following our beloved King to the height of His self-sacrifice. By the light and grace they impart, they aid us to advance rapidly in the way of perfection.

We read in the Life and Revelations of St. Gertrude (p. 348) that she beheld one day our Blessed Lord as He was after He had been whipped at the pillar, covered with wounds, and she asked Him, tenderly: "Alas, Lord, what remedy can we find to sooth Thy agonizing pains?" Our Lord replied: "The most efficacious and tenderest remedy you can prepare for Me is to meditate on My passion, and to pray charitably for the conversion of sinners." It is in this spirit that all the exercises of this day should be performed.

### THE FIRST MEDITATION

#### ON THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST IN THE GARDEN

*1st Prelude.* Read the 26th chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, from the 30th to the 57th verse.



*2nd Prelude.* Behold Christ prostrate in the prayer of His agony.

*3rd Prelude.* Beg grace to condole with Him and to suffer patiently and generously.

*POINT I.* Consider Christ's entrance into the garden.

*The persons:* Christ, my Saviour, goes to suffer for me. The fact then regards me personally, I cannot be indifferent to its details. He selects Peter, John and James to witness His agony. Thus the severest trials come to God's favorites. Christ has prepared them for this trial of their faith by the vision of His glory on Mount Thabor. Thus He provides special aids for special difficulties. All the Apostles have been strengthened for the occasion by Holy Communion. A fall soon after receiving Communion does not prove an unworthy Communion.

*The words.* Peter said: "Although all should be scandalized in thee, I will never be scandalized." Pride goes before a fall. "Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee that, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Christ saith to his Apostles: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." We should not then be discouraged if we shrink from suffering, and are saddened by them.

*The actions.* Jesus prepares for the conflict by betaking Himself to prayer. I must do the same in trials.

*POINT II. The agony. The words:* "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." It is

then perfectly proper to pray for deliverance from the cross; but we must ever add submission to God's holy will: "Not my will but thine be done."

*The actions:* "He cometh to his disciples, and findeth them asleep." We are not then forbidden to seek for consolation from our fellow-men; but we shall usually be disappointed; like Jesus, we must return to prayer. He prayed again, "saying the self-same words." We should not try to be eloquent in prayer, but dwell on a few thoughts or sentiments. We can have no better model of prayer than we have here before us. The Apostles neglected their opportunity; hence their cowardice.

*POINT III. The treason of Judas. The persons.* The Son of God is meanly betrayed by one of His own Apostles. How is the gold obscured! When favorite souls fall away, they often fall the deepest. How did he come to this? From small beginnings, by little thefts at first. One passion left unchecked is enough to ruin the noblest character. All the passions are in every one of us, and need constant watching.

*The words.* "Hail Rabbi." What hypocrisy! "Friend, whereunto art thou come?" Christ still loved the wretch, and kindly wished to bring him back to his duty. That is the charity of my model. Is mine like His?

*The actions.* He receives the kiss of the traitor and shows no indignation. Then Christ lets Himself be seized and bound like a criminal, and He abandons Himself into the hands of His enemies, recognizing in them the executors of His Father's will. "Then the

disciples, all leaving him, fled'' ; and yet all of them had said with Peter that they were ready to go with Him even to death. It is not boasting, but praying we need.

*Colloquy*, thanking our dear Lord for His generous love for us, asking that we may know and love Him better and follow Him more perfectly.

*Notice* that the thoughts here expressed are only suggestions and need not be entertained. The exercitant is apt to be most benefited by what he discovers himself. And when a thought or sentiment strikes him, he should dwell on it as long as it gives him devotion, and not hasten on to other matters.

## THE SECOND MEDITATION

### ON CHRIST'S SUFFERINGS BEFORE HIS JUDGES

*1st Prelude.* Christ was dragged from court to court, everywhere loaded with false accusations ; but He opened not His mouth. He was dressed in a fool's garment, cruelly scourged and crowned with thorns, and bore all patiently. Exposed to the sight of the multitude, He saw a robber preferred to Him, was rejected by His people and condemned to the death of the cross.

*2nd Prelude.* Behold Christ with His hands tied like a criminal, standing before the tribunal of Caiphas.

*3rd Prelude.* My dear Lord, grant me deep sorrow for Thy sufferings and for my sins, by which I have repaid Thy infinite love.

*POINT I.* *Christ is falsely accused.* Consider :

*The persons.* The judges presume to sit in judg-

ment on Him who has proved Himself to be the Son of God. Our sins, like theirs, are often far more serious than we are willing to acknowledge to ourselves. We blind ourselves. Caiphas did so by claiming that it was "expedient that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not" (St. John xi, 50). This was true, but not in the sense the high priest gave to it. Do I ever judge my neighbor unjustly? perhaps even my superiors?

The witnesses little think how wicked their accusations are, leading to the crime of deicide: "The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity" (St. James iii, 6). Meanwhile Christ is silent, to teach us how to suffer; silence under accusations, true or false, is usually better than the most eloquent defense. Isaias had predicted: "He shall be dumb as a lamb before his hearers, and he shall not open his mouth" (liii, 7). He only spoke when the honor of God required it, as when the high priest said: "I conjure thee by the living God that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said to them: Thou has said it. Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God and coming in the clouds of Heaven. They answering said: He is guilty of death" (St. Matth. xxvi, 63-66). What injustice! This is often repeated to-day by those who hate the Church; we must wait patiently for the time of its glorification.

*POINT II. Dressed in a fool's garment, scourged, crowned with thorns.* Behold the humiliations, the cruel sufferings patiently endured by the Redeemer, as



an expiation of your own sins. Try to realize the details of the torments heaped upon Him. That flagellation was borne to expiate sins of the body. Do I practise bodily mortification enough? Soft members are out of place in the mystic body of Christ. He is crowned with thorns; do I look for honors and laurel crowns? He is decked in mockery with a rag of purple; do I delight in vain display? Lord, make me like unto thee.

*POINT III.* Pilate shows Him to the people: "*Ecco homo*," "Behold the man." Let me observe Him well, noticing every indignity inflicted on Him. His head crowned with thorns, His face defiled with spittle, every visible portion of His sacred body livid with bruises and stained with clotted blood: "A worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people" (Ps. 21), "Despised and the most abject of men, a man of sorrows" (Is. liii, 3).

*The words:* "Give us Barabbas and make Jesus away." How can I complain when others are preferred to me? "Let him be crucified"; "His blood be upon us and upon our children." How fearfully has this curse been carried into effect. Behold the whole Jewish race struck with spiritual blindness for already nineteen centuries, in the midst of nations blest with the light of faith. How this ruin of His nation must have grieved the heart of the Redeemer. Pilate vainly tries to disclaim his responsibility for the deicide: "I am innocent of the death of this just man." So we may deceive ourselves, wilfully. Am I always honest in my pretences?

*The actions.* Pilate delivers Christ to be crucified. This is the price paid for every soul, the death of Christ. How precious is a soul! The blood of Christ is the atonement of sin; what a terrible evil is sin!

*Colloquy* with Jesus, as He stands there condemned to an ignominious death; indulging the sentiments aroused by the meditation.

## CONSIDERATION

### ON GENEROSITY IN THE SERVICE OF GOD

When we performed the meditation on the Kingdom of Christ, we imagined a very noble prince, who, at the call of God, abandoned all other pursuits to devote himself to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, and summoned all brave souls to rally under his standard for this exalted purpose. We next considered that this parable was not a mere creation of the fancy, but was a fit expression of a grand reality. For such a noble prince did actually appear on earth, one far nobler than we could have conceived possible, the Son of God Himself, come down to establish the Kingdom of His Father in the hearts of men, and thus prepare them to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. At this summons we resolved to follow Him, and we have really left all things for that purpose, and our highest ambition now is to follow Him most closely by making ourselves as like to Him as, with God's grace, may be possible.

To accomplish this purpose, we have been studying His example, from the moment of His incarnation,

through His birth, childhood, His private and His public life, till we have seen Him deliver Himself into the hands of His enemies, submit to the most shocking indignities and torments; and all this through love for us, paying the penalties of our sins in His own Person, to save us from Hell and make us share His glory. The most appropriate term to express all this devotedness is "boundless generosity." This is the most striking characteristic of our glorious King.

As we are earnestly striving to make ourselves like to Him, we will now consider the excellence of the virtue of generosity; and we do so by preference on this day on which we are meditating on the sacrifices by which Christ's generosity was exhibited in the most impressive manner.

Among natural qualities in man generosity is the noblest, among the supernatural virtues it is the highest, because it is the most Godlike. Charity, the love of God, and of the neighbor for the love of God, is the most perfect virtue, and generosity is the perfection of charity. The highest manifestation that God has made of Himself is twofold, the creation and the incarnation with all its consequences. He created to pour out happiness on other beings, all manners of good things on created natures; He became incarnate to bestow *Himself* on them; and He did so even after they had forfeited their primal destiny. Thus too a man by the practice of generosity gives of his own to others, by supernatural generosity he gives himself entirely to God and to others for the sake of God.

When we give to our neighbor what we owe him, we practise the virtue of justice; when we give to God the honor we owe Him, we practise the virtue of religion, which is a species of justice; but we practice the virtue of generosity when we give more than the Lord demands of us, and thereby we more closely resemble God, on whom we have no claim and who yet gave us all we have.

The proper esteem, as well as the practice of this virtue, is taught us by the grand mysteries on which we meditate to-day. In fact these lessons have been excellently learned by the followers of Christ throughout all the ages of Christianity. See how His Apostles, to a man, gave their whole lives and finally shed their blood, as Jesus had done, for the honor of God, and the salvation of souls.

The same was done by thousands of other followers in after generations and is continued to be done till the present day. Countless solitaries of both sexes, and monks and nuns and missionaries among the heathens have left all things and thus imitated the generosity of the Redeemer. Sacrifice for the same glorious cause is written large over the history of the Church in every age and every land.

It is this spirit of generous sacrifice that we must to-day rekindle in our hearts. We should not now ask ourselves merely, as we did properly some days ago, is there any sacrifice I *am bound* to make if I want to save my immortal soul? but, at the sight of Jesus mocked and scourged, and crowned with thorns and dying like a criminal upon the cross, and all this for



my sins, let me ask myself generously, "what sacrifices *can* I make to God to show my gratitude?"

These sentiments aroused in St. Ignatius, as under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he performed the Spiritual Exercises at Manresa, an ambition beautifully expressed in the motto he selected for his Society *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, "For the Greater Glory of God." For he became so enraptured with the love of Christ that he longed only to sacrifice himself entirely for the honor of God, and to rally around him a generous band of men who should be aglow with the same Divine enthusiasm.

This spirit of generosity, so characteristic of St. Ignatius, is clearly manifested in the Constitutions which he drew up for the guidance and the government of his Society. The whole spirit of his institute is a spirit of generous devotion to the service of God and the good of men. For instance, he wants his followers to be so little attached to their country, or to any place whatever, that they shall be willing to go and live in any part of the world where there is hope of God's greater service and the help of souls. They must leave father and mother, sisters and brothers and whatsoever they had in the world. They must so far resign their right to a good name as to allow all their errors and defects to be manifested to their superiors. They are even urged to wish to suffer reproaches, slanders and injuries, and to be treated and accounted as fools, so as to resemble Jesus Christ, and in all things to seek their greater abnegation and continual mortification. In the exercise of low and mean offices they

must be willing to be employed in such as are more abhorrent to nature.

Certainly all these rules and practices suppose an uncommon degree of generosity. And yet the Saint insists on them, and urges his followers to labor constantly that no point of perfection which by God's grace they can attain in the perfect observance of his Constitutions, be omitted by them. In all things they are to seek God, casting off, as much as is possible, the love of creatures, that they may set all their affections on the Creator.

As to the general spirit of his Society, it is hard to conceive how this could be more generous than it actually is; and no less generosity is seen when the rules descend to practical details. Consider, for instance, the strict interpretation they put on the understanding of the religious vows. They make poverty a total privation of the right to dispose of anything at one's will or discretion, neither allowing one to give nor to receive, to lend nor to borrow any object whatever without permission of the superior.

For the measure and the pattern of the vow of chastity nothing less is proposed than the purity of the blessed Angels in Heaven. To protect this virtue a Jesuit has to submit himself all the days of his life to such careful surveillance as solicitous parents exercise over their daughters, who are not allowed to go outside the house without permission, nor, as far as circumstances allow, without the attendance of a discreet companion.

It is especially with regard to the vow and the virtue

of obedience that generosity is carried to its highest perfection. Not only every command of a superior is to be obeyed, but even every hint of his will is to be complied with, every token of his wishes; and this is to be done promptly, without excuse, without reluctance of the will, without disagreement of the judgment. And in all these observances no one can claim exemption or privilege on account of high offices formerly held, on account of great learning or unusual ability or for any other consideration.

With such precepts and examples before me, what can I do better than to lead henceforth a life of constant generosity? Let me pause to consider carefully and prayerfully what sacrifices in particular I can offer. Speak, Lord! Thy servant heareth; there is nothing I will refuse. Give me the grace of doing what Thou desirest, and ask what Thou wilt.

When our Divine Lord appeared to five of His Apostles after His resurrection, He took St. Peter aside and asked him: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these? He saith to him: Yea Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; He saith to him: Feed my lambs—Feed my sheep." As if He had said: You cannot show Me your love better than by feeding My lambs and My sheep. And thus we too cannot give to Christ a more acceptable proof of our love than that of working for the salvation of souls, the lambs and sheep for which He shed the last drop of His sacred blood. How am I performing that holy task? The question just now is not: am I doing my full duty in the exercise of the sacred ministry? but,

can I do any more than I have done so far, or than I am actually doing for the good of immortal souls? Can I undertake any more work and remain within the bounds of discretion? Or at least can I perform my tasks with more care and devotedness? And can I pray more fervently to draw down God's blessing on my labors?

There is still another way in which we can successfully exercise our zeal for souls, namely by praying and working for the increase of the number of laborers in Christ's vineyard. St. Matthew tells us that, "Seeing the multitudes Christ had compassion on them, because they were distressed and lying like sheep that have no shepherd. Then he said to his disciples: The harvest indeed is great, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he send laborers into his harvest" (ix, 36-38).

Undoubtedly such prayers are daily going up to Heaven asking for more sacred laborers, and in response God is constantly furnishing His Church with new accessions to the number of her ministers. If our prayers were more abundant and more fervent and our efforts more earnest, we could obtain still more. Here too is room for more generous exertions.

## THE THIRD MEDITATION

### ON THE DEATH OF CHRIST

*1st Prelude.* Christ carried His cross a weary way up the mountain, falling repeatedly beneath it. Arrived at the top, He is despoiled of His garments, and



stands there a pillar of bleeding flesh. He is most rudely nailed to the cross, which is next lifted up, and dropped with a shock into its socket. His hands and feet are torn around the nails. He exclaims: "Father, forgive them," says to St. John: "Behold thy mother," exclaims "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit!" and expires. His sacred Heart is pierced.

*2nd Prelude.* Behold Christ hanging on the cross, amid the jeers of His triumphant enemies. He is praying for us all.

*3rd Prelude.* Beg for a loving compassion for His pains and for a deep sorrow for sin.

*POINT I.* Consider how Christ painfully carries His cross. He thus shows us the one way to Heaven, that of suffering. There would have been another way, that of innocence, by which the Angels had entered; but it was closed by the sin of Adam and by our own sins. Now we must all suffer, here or hereafter. The lookers on were of three classes: His enemies, rejoicing; His friends sorrowing; the crowd, indifferent. It is so to-day. The falls of Christ represent our moral falls; these must humble, but not discourage us. He meets His blessed Mother: sufferings bring us nearer to Mary. Condole with her.

*POINT II.* Christ is despoiled of His garments, that He may die in the utmost poverty, in which He has also been born. His clothes cling to His torn flesh, and are removed with no tender hands. He bleeds again at every pore. He is rudely thrown down on the cross; watch the process of the nailing, of the

raising of the cross, of its dropping into the hole with a rude shock, His sacred flesh tearing about the nails. He exclaims: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." What charity! What an example for us His followers! Again He speaks: "Woman, behold thy son," "Behold thy mother." St. John, the only one of the Apostles present, represented the Church; in his person we were all commended to Mary by her dying Son, and we were bidden to hold her as our Mother.

As Christ hung there on the cross, He viewed and read the hearts of all men, for whom He died; He thought of me in person. He exclaimed: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit!" and He expired. Let me resign myself into the hands of God with humble, loving confidence. Let me thank the Lord for His most precious death, repent of my sins, which required such expiation, and pray that sinners may be converted.

Let me lovingly kiss the cross, and in spirit bend my head beneath the stream of His sacred blood, to wash away my sins.

The sacred heart of Jesus is next pierced with a lance, to open that sanctuary for me and for all sinners. Let me adore that Divine Heart, and promise to love and honor it, and teach others to do the same.

*Colloquy* with Jesus, my loving Saviour; with Mary, the Mother of Sorrows; pleading for pardon, protesting my love and my boundless gratitude.

## THE EIGHTH DAY

So far we have followed our King, Jesus Christ, through His humiliations, labors and sufferings from His incarnation to His cruel death; we must now follow Him in His glorified life. There too He is still our leader, by whose side we must triumph, as we have fought by His side. We must now rejoice with Him. For joy at His exaltation is worship; and at the same time it encourages us to follow Him generously and lovingly and to persevere to the end. Such is the purpose of the Fourth Week of St. Ignatius's Exercises.

### THE FIRST MEDITATION

#### ON THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

*1st Prelude.* The soul of Christ, accompanied by the holy souls from Limbo, comes to the tomb. He arises glorious. The holy women come to annoint the body. "He is not here." Christ appears to His Blessed Mother, to the penitent Magdalen, to St. Peter, to the devout women.

*2nd Prelude.* Behold the glorified body of the Saviour, as He arises from the tomb. Imagine the scene.

*3rd Prelude.* Ask to rejoice with Him for His own sake, and to be thereby encouraged to suffer like Him.

*POINT I.* Behold the scene of His resurrection. First see the lifeless body, with its gaping wounds and discolored flesh. In union with the blessed souls, adore it. Then as Christ's soul enters it, behold how it is transformed. How different He is now from "the man of sorrows"! His sacred countenance beams with happiness. Recall His former transfiguration on Mount Thabor: "His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as snow." On His head there is still a crown, but no more of thorns, but now one of glory. His sacred wounds are in His hands and feet and in His side, but they drip no more with blood, but pour forth rays of light. Bow down in loving adoration, and in spirit humbly kiss His feet, and adore your sovereign Lord. Ask Him to bless you, and to strengthen you to follow in His footsteps.

*POINT II.* Imagine you see the blessed souls proceed, in company with Christ, to visit the cross, on which He expiated the sins of the world. Adore the cross, and kiss it lovingly. Bow down and kiss the spot on which He was nailed to the tree. Next, retracing the way of the cross, meditate lovingly on His various sufferings.

At last accompany the Lord in spirit as He goes to visit and console His Blessed Mother. There behold her still seated in the deepest affliction, the Mother of Sorrows, plunged in an agony of grief, like that which had made the Saviour exclaim: "Father, if it be possible let this chalice pass from me." When suddenly a soft radiance fills the room, and, as she looks up, she sees before her the glorified form of her Divine Son.



Pause to share in her exceeding joy and love and gratitude. Remember that thus your sufferings too will one day be exchanged for boundless bliss.

*POINT III.* Consider how meanwhile the pious women were hastening, at early dawn, on their way from the city to the tomb, carrying with them precious ointments to embalm more perfectly the sacred body of their Lord. They ask one another as they approach the sacred spot: "Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great" (St. Mark xvi, 3).

Thus it is that we often see difficulties before us, and we see no way of escape; but a kind Providence brings us unexpected help: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me" wrote St. Paul (Phil. iv, 13). We should not be too timid when we work for the glory of God.

Still the holy women are not favored with the sight of the Saviour, but they are sent by the Angel with a message to the Apostles; in due time Jesus will reward their devotion. "And behold Jesus met them, saying, All hail, But they came up and took hold of his feet and adored him" (St. Matth. xxviii, 9). This favor was the reward of their loving service. Oh! that we could serve the Redeemer as they did! We can do so by honoring Him in the Blessed Sacrament, visiting Him there, adorning His altars. We can also do it by serving the poor: "Amen, I say to you: as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me" (Ib. xxv, 40).

The Lord has His own sweet way of encouraging us. Before appearing to those pious women, He appeared first to St. Mary Magdalen, out of whom He has cast seven devils; then He appeared to Simon Peter, who had foresworn Him. Truly Christ had come on earth to save sinners; none of us should ever despond.

*A loving colloquy* with our dear Lord, adoring Him, congratulating Him on His triumphs, in spirit embracing His sacred feet, begging for grace to walk in His blessed footsteps till we too partake of His glory.

## THE SECOND MEDITATION

### ON CHRIST'S ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN

*1st Prelude.* Read Acts, i, 1-11.

*2nd Prelude.* Behold the scene on Mount Olivet, Christ rising above the crowd of His disciples, every one of whom looks lovingly upwards, enraptured by the sight of His triumph.

*3rd Prelude.* Beg to rejoice for Christ's sake, and to be encouraged to follow your King faithfully to the end.

*POINT I.* Consider 1. *The Persons:* Christ, the former "Man of Sorrows," now the conqueror of death, the glorified Lord of Heaven. He is still our King, leading the army of His followers into the Kingdom of His Father. I must follow Him on earth, that I may follow Him into Heaven. By His side stands His blessed Mother, how exultant now in His triumph! There is the Magdalen, rapt in an ecstasy

of joy; St. Peter, St. John, all His dearest friends, rejoicing at the blissful vision.

2. *The actions.* Christ is ascending Heavenwards, going to take possession of His Kingdom. All His disciples raise their eyes and their hands towards His ascending form, and experience a foretaste of that happiness which is to be their eternal reward.

3. *The circumstances.* Where does Christ ascend? In sight of Calvary. When? But a few weeks after His dreadful death. So too will our trials come to an early end, much earlier perhaps than we anticipate.

*POINT II.* Consider Christ's entrance into Heaven amid the adoring and exulting choirs of the entire angelic host, and proceeding to occupy the most magnificent of all thrones, prepared for Him at the right hand of His Father. Then began a bliss not less real than His sufferings had been, with a joy ever ancient and ever new, and destined to last for all eternity. Happy souls, redeemed by His sacred death, and purified in His precious blood, are flocking in from every clime, and are received to His loving embrace. What ecstasy! Shall I ever reach that goal? It is destined for me. Jesus is the King whom I am serving. He knows me, He loves me, He beckons me on.

*POINT III.* Look around that blissful abode. Who are there? All the truly good of every generation. There, on that bright throne nearest to Jesus is His Blessed Mother Mary, the queen of Heaven and earth, the refuge of sinners, the help of Christians, my

loving Mother. Kneeling in spirit at her feet I will ask for perseverance in her service. There are my blessed patrons, whom I have honored on earth, now ready to welcome me to their happy company. Holy Saints of God, pray for me! There are many blessed souls whom I knew in the days of their own trials on earth, my parents and relatives and fellow-religious, and some perhaps whom I have benefited in life, or after their death in Purgatory.

All look down on me with loving eyes, and bid me persevere and improve further in fervor of life; for "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, which shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii, 18).

*POINT IV.* Consider the words of the two Angels: "Why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven shall so come as you have seen him going into heaven." For this second coming of the Lord we must now prepare by active work. The days of the retreat will soon be past, we must return to the daily drudgery of life; but we must do so with a renewed spirit of genuine devotion. We must prepare like the Prudent Virgins: "At midnight there was a cry made: Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him—And they that were ready went in with him to the marriage" (St. Matth. xxv, 6-10).

*Colloquy.* Address our dear Lord lovingly, joyfully, congratulating Him on His triumph, and begging for a generous spirit of sacrifice in His service.



## CONSIDERATION

## ON THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

The ultimate purpose of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, is to make us serve God in the most perfect manner possible, and therefore in the spirit of love, or charity: "Now there remain faith, hope, and charity; these three, but the greater of these is charity" (I Cor. xiii, 13). Love is the most excellent homage that the creature can render to the Creator. Behold the bee in the springtime issuing from its hive and soaring afar over the sunny fields. It is in quest of honey: Honey is all it cares for. It passes by the velvet pansy, the flaming tulip, and lights with eagerness on the humble clover, because it finds honey there. Thus too some men prize and seek nothing but riches, others only honor, others pleasure, etc.

What can there be in this vast material universe that God would deign to care for? It is love of the human heart. It is His delight to be with the children of men, as He tells us in the Book of Proverbs: "My delights to be with the children of men" (viii, 31). And what does the Lord desire from men? He states it further on: "My son, give me thy heart" (Ib. xxiii, 26); that is, of course, thy love; for the heart of man is the emblem of love. Without love nothing has value in God's eyes, as the Apostle proclaims so eloquently in his First Epistle to the Corinthians: "If I should distribute all my goods to the poor, and I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not

charity, it profiteth me nothing" (xiii, 3). This charity is so pleasing to Heaven because it comes from Heaven; it is Divine: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (Rom. v, 5). Of course, our love of God is no benefit to Him, no more than the love of a little child for its parents is any profit to them. The infant causes any amount of inconvenience and trouble in the home. Its loving looks and tender caresses are all it can give in return for the kindness shown it; but this is sufficient in the eyes of affectionate parents. We are like infants before the Lord, we can give Him nothing that He stands in need of, all He desires of us is that we love Him; and this very love He turns to our own advantage, for He rewards it most richly.

Besides this reward, there is another advantage derived from loving God, namely that love lightens all burdens of life. Why does a young mother, formerly rapped up in the pursuit of pleasure, now sit so patiently for hours by the bedside of her ailing child, forgetful of all worldly amusements,—except because she loves that infant. Love makes all efforts pleasing; as Thomas à Kempis puts it: *Facile equitat quem gratia Dei portat*, "He rides along with ease who is borne up by the grace of God." So if we are animated by the love of God, we rejoice in serving Him, we hunger and thirst after justice. And this cheerful service on our part vastly increases the love God has for our persons; "For God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. ix, 7).

And thus by the practice of Divine love the bond

that unites the human soul with our Blessed Lord grows stronger and stronger. Therefore, while the worldling sees nothing but hardships in the religious state, the inmates of the cloister would consider it the saddest misfortune if they were compelled to leave their happy homes and return to the world.

This love of God is that sacred fire of which Christ said: "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (St. Luke xii, 49). It shone with a most refulgent light when, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost appeared in the form of fiery tongues and filled the minds and hearts of the disciples. And see how the Divine love, then received, transformed the Apostles into new men. Before, they had been very dull of comprehension, some of them asking the Saviour on the day of His ascension whether He was then going to restore the Kingdom of Israel; then they became at once the infallible teachers of the world. Before, they had been cowardly men, locked up in the upper room for fear of the Jews; then they were suddenly changed into heroes, rejoicing, when they had been publicly whipped, that they were allowed to suffer for the name of Jesus. All of them were glad to die for their Lord. Countless martyrs were enkindled with the same fire of love; men, timid women, little boys, tender maidens, astonishing the Pagans by their heroic fortitude.

When the early persecutions were past, thousands of solitaries retired from the allurements of the world, and were led by the spirit of Divine love into frightful solitudes to spend their lives in penance and prayer,

thinking of God alone. Every subsequent age in the history of the Church is replete with similar exhibitions of the love of Jesus. Hundreds of thousands of Christians left home and country, and sacrificed their lives to rescue from the hands of Pagans the tomb of the Redeemer. Others, during the Ages of Faith, devoted their riches or their personal labor to erect magnificent cathedrals, and provide a rich supply of gold and silver vases, of precious vestments and ornaments for the house of their beloved Lord.

When the charity of many had grown cold, the Blessed Saviour knew how to rekindle its fires by means of the devotion to His Sacred Heart. He appeared to His humble servant Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque, and said to her: "Behold the heart that has loved men so much, and yet I receive nothing but ingratitude in return." The whole purpose of this beautiful devotion is to elicit the love of human hearts for their loving Saviour, so as to unite God and men together by the golden bond of love.

To promote this devotion Jesus has been liberal in His promises. For those who practise it fervently He promised that He would be their secure refuge during life and above all in death, that He would bestow a rich blessing on all their undertakings, that by it tepid souls would become fervent, and fervent souls would mount quickly to a high perfection, that He would give to priests the gift of touching the hardest hearts, that He would write in His sacred Heart the names of those who would zealously promote this devotion and He would never allow them to be blotted out.



It is conformable to the sweet ways of Providence to make the remedy of an evil reach further than the disease. Thus, when our race had been disgraced by the sin of Adam, God far more than repaired the harm done; which makes holy Church exclaim with gladness: "Oh, happy fault, which merited to have such a Redeemer!" And so it has been with the devotion to the Sacred Heart. It was instituted by the Lord that men might learn to appreciate more highly His love for us, and return Him a more ardent love than was given Him before, to atone also for the coldness and the sins of others, and to induce all to receive more frequently His Sacred body and blood. It is truly wonderful how successfully all this has been accomplished. Now millions of persons of all ages and conditions in life, have formed the excellent habit of daily giving their first thoughts to elicit an act of love for Jesus, and offering all their actions and sufferings at the opening of each day for the intentions of the Sacred Heart. And it is probably no exaggeration to say that, since Christ's desire of frequent Communion was whispered by Him to Blessed Margaret Mary, the number of Holy Communions daily received has increased, not only a hundred but a thousand fold.

And while such devout practices have thus multiplied beyond all calculation, the main purpose of it all has been attained to a most consoling extent. For while the age in which we live is becoming more and more indifferent and often hostile to the Lord, His true friends long more ardently than before to return to Him love for love, and to induce countless souls to serve Him

in the spirit of love. This spirit no doubt animates our own hearts. It has now been enkindled anew in the Spiritual Exercises; and it ought to be the dominant note in the new life for which this retreat has been a preparation. Let us do our utmost, with the help of Divine grace, to do all things henceforth in the spirit of the love of God. This spirit of love is beautifully expressed in the

#### HYMN OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

My God, I love Thee! not because  
I hope for Heaven thereby;  
Nor because those who love Thee not  
Must burn eternally.

Thou, O my Jesus, Thou didst me  
Upon the Cross embrace!  
For me didst bear the nails and spear,  
And manifold disgrace,

And griefs and torments numberless,  
And sweat of agony,  
Yea, death itself—and all for one  
That was Thine enemy.

Then why, O Blessed Jesus Christ,  
Should I not love Thee well?  
Not for the hope of winning Heaven  
Nor of escaping Hell;

Not with the hope of gaining aught,  
Not seeking a reward;  
But as Thyself hast loved me,  
O everlasting Lord!

E'en so I love Thee, and will love,  
And in Thy praise will sing—  
Solely because Thou art my God,  
And my eternal King.

Translation of E. CASWALL.

## THE THIRD MEDITATION

## ON DIVINE LOVE

After our consideration on the value and excellence of Divine love and its connection with the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we are now to meditate on some striking manifestations of God's love for us, and on various ways in which we can manifest our love for Him.

We begin, with St. Ignatius, by remarking that genuine love does not consist in a mere feeling, or sentiment, but in the will to please or benefit the person loved, even at the cost of sacrifice on our part. For instance, imagine two boys, coming home for vacation from a boarding school, differing greatly in the manifestation of their affection for parents and kindred, whom both were glad to meet again. One of them was very demonstrative of his tender feelings; you would have thought that his love for all was far greater than that of his less effusive brother. After a few days however their father had a task for them to do which required a little sacrifice on their part. Then the affectionate lad had all manner of excuses to evade the trouble, without giving a thought to his father's needs, while his brother quietly volunteered to do the work of both. His love was genuine; such should be our love for God.

A second remark of St. Ignatius is that love between two persons is increased by the frequent interchange of kindly services. The more we do for God, and the

more we consider what He has done for us, the more devoted we shall become to Him, and the more pleasing in His sight.

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you behold Jesus before you, looking benignly down upon you as upon a loved child.

*2nd Prelude.* Beg fervently for an increase of love for Him.

*POINT I.* Recall to mind the principal benefits you have received from God, from your birth till the present day, both those common to you and all others, and particularly those peculiar to yourself, tracing the wonderful ways in which a benign Providence has guided you to your present state. Render hearty thanks to the Lord, and make Him the following offering in return: "Accept, O Lord, all my liberty, accept my memory, my understanding and my will. Thou hast given me all these powers; I restore them all to Thee, and I deliver them entirely into Thy hands that Thou mayest direct them. Only give me Thy love and Thy grace; these are all I desire."

*POINT II.* See how God is most intimately present to you, not only as the water of the ocean is about a sponge, before it and behind, above and below, right and left of it and within every pore, but He penetrates your entire body and soul, and His delight is to be with the children of men.

On your part resolve to keep yourself constantly in the presence of God, cultivating the habit of thinking lovingly about God, speaking with Him when not otherwise employed. This need not cause a strain of mind; it only gives an excellent direction to our



thoughts and affections, which would otherwise be wasted upon useless or perhaps even unworthy objects. Lovingly offer this resolution to your dear Lord, and ask Him to bless and prosper it.

*POINT III.* Consider how God is unceasingly working for you, as a loving father works for the support of his children. He causes the earth to produce whatever you need for food and raiment and lodging; in far distant climes He makes the fruits and the spices grow which are to refresh and to cheer you. Resolve, in return, to labor strenuously for whatever will promote the glory of God. The field of zealous labors for the honor of God and the good of souls, the children of God, is vast and varied. Christ bids us pray the Lord of the harvest that he may send laborers into His harvest (St. Luke x, 2). Offer yourself to be a devoted laborer, ask for toils and even hardships in this noble service. See what special efforts you can make in this matter, and offer your resolves to the Lord.

*POINT IV.* Every trait of goodness, whatever is amiable or admirable in any creature, is but a faint reflection of an infinite perfection in the Creator. A bright flower, a vast prospect, a noble deed, an affectionate heart and a thousand other charms found on earth are able, each of them, to raise our minds to the thought of the beauty, the grandeur, the infinite loveliness of our dear Lord. Thus the sight of a pretty flower sometimes threw St. Ignatius into an ecstasy of Divine love.

Resolve, that, whenever any charm on earth arouses your love or admiration, you will take occasion from

it to raise your heart to God, and to elicit an act of love for Him who is the source and the pattern of all that can duly delight the human heart.

*Colloquy.* Finish this last meditation of the retreat with a generous consecration of yourself and of all you have to the love and service of your dear Lord and Master, either in your own words or in those of St. Ignatius quoted in the first point of this exercise, or in the loving renovation of your religious vows.

THE END OF THE EIGHT DAYS RETREAT.

## SIX TRIDUUMS

IN PREPARATION FOR THE SEMI-ANNUAL  
RENOVATION OF THE VOWS

## TRIDUUM A

### MEDITATION I

#### ON THE DESIRE OF PERFECTION

*1st Prelude.* Hear Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, saying to His disciples: "Be ye perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (St. Matth. v, 48).

*2nd Prelude.* Beg for an earnest desire of perfection.

*POINT I.* *One great hindrance to attain perfection* is the want of desire to attain it, a want of proper appreciation of this exalted privilege. This state of mind is:

1. *Very unreasonable, unwise.* It is like the deplorable disposition of many college boys, whom we blame and despise, because they have not sense enough to value their opportunity to acquire an education. Their fault is palliated by their youth; they will be sorry afterwards. There is no such excuse for religious. They ought to know better. Striving after perfection is the main duty of their state.

2. *Very inexpedient for their happiness even in this world.*

"The heart of man is made for God! nothing but God can make it happy," says St. Augustine. A lax



religious is less happy than a fervent one; he does not enjoy that peace of mind which the world cannot give; he worries, frets at many things, unlike the fervent.

3. *Inexpedient for the next life*, causing immense loss of merit and future glory, exchanged for trifles.

4. *Injurious to our neighbor*, whose salvation depends to a great extent on our holiness.

*POINT II.* A second hindrance to the attainment of perfection consists in a want of confidence of attaining it. Some imagine that perfection, desirable as it is in itself, is out of the question for them, they are unworthy of aspiring to it. Now distrust of self is excellent, but we must not distrust God, either His power or His love for us. God is not like the man condemned in the Gospel who began to build and could not carry the building to completion. He has invited us to aim at perfection; for that is the nature of the religious life. We have accepted His invitation; it is now for Him to furnish us copious means to attain perfection. The die is cast; we are pledged to strive after perfection, and God has pledged Himself to provide. Father Lallemand, so enlightened in spiritual matters, has left written that the holiness to which every Jesuit is called surpasses all imagination, and that, if any one could see the amount of grace that God has prepared for each of us, he would conclude they were destined for no less a Saint than an Ignatius or a Xavier (Spiritual Doctrine, page 29).

We ought confidently to say with St. Paul: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me," *Omnia*

*possum in eo qui me confortat* (Phil. iv, 13), and with the Psalmist: "If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear," "*Si consistent adversum me castra, non timebit cor meum*" (Ps. 26).

*POINT III.* *Some religious say they know not how to attain perfection.* The way is plain enough, if only we make up our mind to follow it. It requires:

1. *The faithful observance of our rules:* whoever observes them perfectly is a real saint. We all observe most of them; let us observe all of them.

2. *Much good prayer,* performing our spiritual exercises faithfully and fervently. In particular let us perform this triduum to the best of our power.

What is required for this purpose?

- a. Silence and recollection;
- b. Earnest meditations;
- c. Spiritual readings that speak to our hearts;
- d. Careful examinations of our spiritual progress.

*Colloquy* with our dear Lord, asking for a thorough renovation of Spirit.

## MEDITATION II

### IN WHAT PERFECTION CONSISTS

*1st Prelude.* See God enthroned in Heaven, and all the Saints lovingly looking up to Him.

*2nd Prelude.* Beg grace to understand in what perfection really consists.

*POINT I.* A thing is good if it answers fairly well the purpose for which it is made; it is perfect if

it answers that purpose as well as is desirable. Thus a pen is perfect if it is every way suitable to write with, a watch is perfect if it always keeps time. Now man is made to love God; he is therefore perfect if he devotes himself entirely to the love of God. That perfection consists formally in Charity is expressly stated by St. Paul, who writes to the Colossians: "Above all things have charity, which is the bond of perfection" (iii, 14).

To attain perfection, therefore, we must accustom ourselves to be totally taken up with God and God's interests, for God's sake. This is the main purpose aimed at by Father Faber in his excellent book "All for Jesus." Read for instance, pages 48, 49. Much of this may be in many men merely sentimental, or poetical. To make it actual in us, real in our conduct and the dispositions of our will, seeking God in all things, is true sanctity. At this we must steadily aim. It is in fact the motto of our Society: *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*, "To the Greater Glory of God." A perfect man is a man of one idea, the idea of the greater glory of God.

*POINT II. Such devotedness to God requires detachment from all creatures; this detachment is not itself perfection, but it is a necessary condition to attain this entire devotedness, in which perfection consists. We must act like the man who had found a treasure hidden in a field, who to secure it went and sold all he had to buy that field; and like him who, to buy the precious pearl, went and sold all he had (St. Matth. xiii, 44-46). We must be detached. Our*

hearts are so narrow that we cannot give a part of them to one object without detracting from our love for another, except only if we love the former solely for the sake of the latter. Thus we should love all for God. Therefore we start on the road to perfection by leaving all things to follow Him. It must not prevent us from taking interest in many things, else we become wooden saints. With a St. Ignatius, a St. Francis Xavier, a St. Catherine of Sienna, etc., we must cherish eager desires of many projects, but only in as much as they promote God's glory and the salvation of souls.

*POINT III. In particular the study of perfection requires constant efforts:* 1. To adorn our soul with more and more virtue, 2. To correct our faults, 3. For this purpose, to labor earnestly at our particular examen, our confessions, 4. To direct our spiritual readings and meditations to the purposes of the illuminative way, returning to the purgative way if there arises some special need of it. Keep weeding, planting, binding. The chief point in this triduum is to see whether we have been of late seriously laboring at the acquisition of perfection as we now understand it: in particular whether we are attached to any creature so as to retard our progress, or habituated to commit any faults, which must be corrected; also how we profit by our Holy Communions, our meditations, etc., so as to promote steady progress in virtue.

*Colloquy.* Ask for the special graces of which you see a present need.



## MEDITATION III

## CHRIST THE MODEL OF PERFECTION

*1st Prelude.* See Christ carrying His cross, and saying: "*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me*" (St. Matth. xvi, 24).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask for grace to follow Christ faithfully.

*POINT I.* Consider the consoling truth that *Christ has really made Himself our guide*. He is such by word and example. We could not have a nobler nor safer guide. He has led millions before us to the highest happiness. In this text *He invites us to follow Him*. Let us thank Him for this gracious offer and eagerly accept it. He is to us what the Angel Raphael was to Tobias. True, Tobias could see the Angel, but he did not know who he was; we cannot see Christ, but we know who He is and how He has acted. Our Society undertakes to follow Him in all the details of our lives. In this following consists perfection. We are actually following Him; but how earnestly? how generously? Can we not improve in many respects?

*POINT II.* Consider the words: "*Let him deny himself.*" Christ denied Himself: His ease, His health and life, His honor. In trying to follow Him we made a good beginning when we left our parents and all earthly possessions; to crown the work we must leave ourselves: *1st. Our ease*, by hard work, without

repining, with joy and perseverance. Many seculars work much harder than we do, but many do so grudgingly. Not so Christ; we must do like Him.

*2nd, Our health and life*, leaving all this in God's hands, with proper care indeed, but no solicitude. Oh, if we could die in His service! It would be the greatest happiness. We may have that good fortune if we never shirk any duty. *3, Our honor*. Christ willingly made Himself "A worm and no man, the reproach of men and the outcast of the people" (Ps. 21). The lowest on earth at first, He is now the highest in Heaven, and He invites us to follow Him. When we experience loss of ease, of health, of honor, how do we take it?

*POINT III*. Consider the words: "*and take up his cross.*" What is our cross? It is not so heavy as Christ's. Our cross is: *1st, Our daily tasks*. Perform them faithfully, zealously, cheerfully. *2nd, Our afflictions, sufferings, failures, disappointments*. Be patient, do not despond: "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof" (St. Matth. vi, 34). Trust in God: "No one hath hoped in the Lord and hath been confounded" (Ecclus. ii, 11).

*3rd, Our passions*; we must keep them in check by unremitting efforts.

*4th, The conduct of others*: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you—Be glad and rejoice for your reward is very great in heaven" (St. Matth. v, 11). "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii, 18).

*POINT IV.* Consider the words: “*And follow me.*” Keep your eyes on Jesus carrying His cross. Notice: 1. His exterior behavior. Do we properly observe our rules of modesty? 2. His interior sentiments. Like His Sacred Heart, is our heart at peace? Kind to all? Conformable to God’s will? “Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you shall find rest to your souls” (St. Matth. xi, 29).

*Colloquy.* “Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou shall go” (St. Matth. viii, 19).

## MEDITATION IV

### THE NEED OF PRAYER TO ATTAIN PERFECTION

*1st Prelude.* See the Apostles around Christ, and saying: “Lord teach us to pray” (St. Luke xi, 1).

*2nd Prelude.* Beg earnestly to become a man of prayer.

*POINT I.* *No perfection is attainable without much fervent prayer.* For perfection consists in charity, the love of God, and this love is not natural to man. Men naturally view everything as related to themselves, to their earthly advantages of business, ease, pleasure, honor, etc. Perfection substitutes God for self. This, being altogether supernatural, requires much grace, and the ordinary means to obtain grace is prayer.

Those who enter on the way to perfection must be trained to the pursuit of it. All religious Orders use for this purpose a copious supply of prayer. Our Society in particular has constant recourse to this

means: the long retreats, the yearly octiduums, the triduums, the daily meditations, holy masses, holy communions, daily litanies, examinations of conscience, the Divine Office, the beads, visits to the Blessed Sacraments, etc. Most of these exercises are to be continued during life.

By all this prayer we get to realize practically what worldlings know only in theory: God's love, mercy, majesty, holiness, justice, eternity, providence, etc., His incarnation, the Blessed Sacrament, the power and love of Mary, etc.

*POINT II. When are we men of prayer?* When we have learned to refer all things explicitly to God. Cardinal Bellarmin points out three degrees of prayer:

1st, Some speak to God, but hear no answer, like the populace in the street crying to a distant king.

2nd, Others receive some token that they are attended to, like men admitted to an audience and allowed to file a petition.

3rd, Others converse with God and He with them; they hear more than they say, and, like courtiers, can approach their Lord frequently. How is it with us? Are we accustomed to turn to God readily, confidently, lovingly? Some have the gift of prayer before they enter the novitiate, some get it during their early years of religious life and ever increase it, some partly lose it amid active duties, some get it at their ordination, some during their third year of probation, while others never acquire it to any great extent. It can be obtained by earnest petition and fidelity in the practice of devout prayer.



*POINT III. What difference does it make in a man?* He may be a religious, but not a good one unless he becomes a man of prayer; nor is he safe meanwhile. For one cannot lead the life of a fervent and faithful religious unless he possess considerable command over his passions, and he cannot maintain this self-mastery without much good prayer. Yet he may do so without attaining the third degree of prayer. But when he reaches that, he becomes a different man, a special friend of God, enlightened, strengthened, not impeccable, yet pretty safe; a powerful means for the salvation of souls. Such have been all the models proposed by holy Church for our imitation.

*POINT IV. What chance have we Jesuits of becoming men of prayer?* An excellent chance. The third degree of prayer is a common gift of God in our Society. It is the obvious tendency of our frequent retreats. The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius aim directly to produce this fruit, and the Lord has entrusted the direction of them to our Fathers, whose duty it is to give them to priests and the laity, even to members of the most contemplative Orders. Many of our ascetic writers exhibit this gift in a conspicuous degree. Am I a man of prayer? What can I do to improve in this important matter?

*Colloquy.* Earnest petition for the gift of prayer, and for light and grace to take the proper measures to procure progress.

## MEDITATION V

## THE POWER OF PRAYER TO OBTAIN PERFECTION

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you are listening to Christ at the Sermon on the Mount while He says: "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you" (St. Matth. vii, 7).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask earnestly to obtain great confidence in prayer.

*POINT I. Prayer is a spiritual gold mine.* When gold is discovered on a piece of arid land, the owners have at once at their disposal the means of becoming very rich. Similarly the soul that begins to understand the efficacy of prayer can obtain by its means a copious supply of actual graces, by which Heaven and perfection are easily secured. For Providence has so disposed that grace is readily obtained by prayer, and some holy Doctors therefore call it the key to the treasury of God. The riches of that treasury are inexhaustible. They are intended for us and put at our disposal. It was by prayer that a St. Aloysius, a St. Stanislaus and countless others became saints in their childhood, that St. Ignatius, St. Francis Xavier, etc., etc., were led from a worldly to a holy life. All of us have the same means at our disposal.

*POINT II. Listen to Christ's own invitation and promises.*

Read St. Matth. vii, 7-11, St. John xvi, 23, 24.

Notice that these promises do not suppose great virtue in him who prays. For Christ addresses them to

sinner, saying: "If you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (St. Matth. vii, 11). We are most readily heard when we ask for spiritual favors. This is clearly stated by the Saviour, for He says: "How much more will your Father from heaven give *the good Spirit to them* that ask him?" (St. Luke xi, 13).

*POINT III.* Why are we not always heard in prayer? Because we do not fulfil the required conditions. 1. We must ask what is really good for us. For St. James writes: "You ask and receive not; because you ask amiss, that you may consume it on your concupiscences" (iv, 3).

2. We must ask with great confidence. We go to draw the waters of grace from a rich fountain, but the vessel of our confidence may be so small that we can carry off but little. While the multitudes pressed upon Jesus on all sides, one afflicted woman was cured because she touched Him with great confidence; and He said: "Somebody hath touched me, for I know that virtue is gone out from me. . . . But He said to her: Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole" (St. Luke viii, 46-48).

3. We must ask with proper reverence and attention.

For how could we expect God to mind our petitions if we do not attend to them ourselves? If we pray thus He may say: "This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" (St. Matth. xv, 8).

4. We must pray with perseverance, as Christ teaches by the parable of the importunate man who came to ask for aid during the night, and obtained it because he persevered in his importunity (St. Luke xi, 5-8).

5. We must pray with resignation to God's will, as Christ Himself did in His agony, saying: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (St. Matth. xxvi, 39). We must be full of confidence that no good prayer ever goes up to Heaven which does not obtain a grace; but God knows best what grace will benefit us most, and He deals with us as a loving father with his children.

*Colloquy.* Ask eagerly for great confidence in the power of prayer.

## MEDITATION VI

### THE AID OF MARY TO ATTAIN PERFECTION

*1st Prelude.* See the Blessed Virgin Mary in Heaven, surrounded by the Saints of our Society.

*2nd Prelude.* Ask for a fervent devotion to her.

*POINT I.* Consider what part God has assigned to her, in the salvation and sanctification of mankind.

The first promise of the Redeemer referred to her as destined to crush the serpent's head. The work of the redemption began with her at the Annunciation. At her voice Elizabeth and her child were filled with the Holy Ghost. As through Mary Jesus was given to the world, so through her He is given to His servants in-



dividually. As she was with Jesus all through His life on earth, so Mary is ever ready to aid each one of us all through our earthly pilgrimage. On Calvary all of us were committed to her care in the person of St. John. In her company the disciples received the Holy Ghost. She has been bodily taken up to Heaven to intercede for us with the Lord, and to beckon us on to follow her. She is daily co-operating for the sanctification of numberless souls through her multifarious religious Orders and Congregations, her Rosary and Scapular Societies and divers other Confraternities, etc., St. Liguori and various other Doctors say that every grace given to men passes through her hands and that a true child of Mary is never lost.

*POINT II. Consider what the Blessed Virgin Mary has been to our Society in particular.* She appeared to St. Ignatius at Loyola, set the seal on his conversion and freed him once for all from temptations of the flesh; she made him her devoted Knight at Mont-Serrat; she aided him in composing his Spiritual Exercises at Manresa; she received the first vows of the little band at Montmartre on the feast of her Assumption. She figures most conspicuously in the lives of all our Saints; of St. Stanislaus, St. Aloysius, St. John Berchmans, St. Alphonsus, Blessed Baldinucci, etc., etc. She has given us the direction of her Sodalities, and by its means has helped us to promote piety and purity among countless numbers of her clients. Thank her warmly for all she has done in our favor, and ask an increase of sanctity for yourself and for all your religious brethren.

*POINT III. Let each one consider what favors he personally owes to the Blessed Virgin.* Retrace in mind your practices of devotion to her from your early childhood to the present day. Offer once more all you have ever done in her honor. Think of the protection she has afforded you with a mother's love, her probable influence on your vocation to the Society, on your novice fervor, on all your religious life up to the present day. Is there any devotion which you ever practised in her honor and which you have since discontinued? With what fervor do you daily honor her? Could you do more to honor or to please her? either by your own conduct or by your influence over others?

*Colloquy.* Speak to Mary confidently and lovingly, asking for light and grace to improve further in your zeal for her glory.

## TRIDUUM B

### MEDITATION I

#### ON THE VOWS

*1st Prelude.* Imagine the scene of your first vows.

*2nd Prelude.* Ask light and grace to prepare for a fervent renovation.

*POINT I.* What did we do when we first took our vows?

We offered ourselves to God as a holocaust—with parents, home, possessions, prospects—body and soul—understanding and will,—to belong to God alone, to devote our entire life to His service and glory. If we had died then, what would have been our reward? Life everlasting (St. Matth. xix, 29). That reward is still due us; it cannot be forfeited or even diminished except by mortal sin. And if thus lost, it is regained by penance in its entirety. Thank the Lord warmly for such a treasure, ask grace to be ever faithful, and to profit by this triduum to increase your fervor.

*POINT II.* *What has been our life ever since?* The gradual consummation of the great sacrifice, the accomplishment of our spiritual martyrdom. Then we entered the prison, the exile; now we are leading the martyr's life, dying the martyr's death. If we do not find it hard, it is because grace supports us: "*Facile*

*equitat quem gratia Dei portat* "He rides along with ease who is borne up by the grace of God," says Thomas à Kempis. Still our life may be at times unsatisfactory; it is a martyr's life, above the power of mere human nature, full of merit, doing honor to God, hated by the enemies of God, salutary to ourselves and to the neighbor. This life is never at a standstill, but ever moving onward and upward; therefore it is up-hill work. And because it is a combat against sensual inclinations, it has its alterations of successes and reverses; its progress heavenward is not represented by a straight but by a curved line. When it gets below a certain level, or tends downwards at all, we must beware.

*Facilis descensus Averni* "The descent to Hell is easy." This is the very reason for the need of such triduums as the present. Thank God, ask pardon, resolve.

*POINT III. Compare your former with your present dispositions* regarding your general spirit of fervor, your faithful observance of rules, even the most minute, your obedience, even of will and judgment, your earnestness in prayer, your self-distrust, your charity to the neighbor, your unworldliness, your zeal for souls, your patience. Above all avoid all wilful faults.

*Colloquy.* Ask earnestly for a thorough renovation of spirit, and offer your resolutions to the Lord.



## MEDITATION II

## ON RENOVATION OF THE VOWS

*1st Prelude.* Imagine God says to you: "My son, give me thy heart" (Prov. xxiii, 26).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask grace to do so most earnestly.

*POINT I.* Consider the origin of this renovation.

It was begun by St. Ignatius and his first companions while they were students at Paris, where they met every year in the Church of Montmartre, on the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, the anniversary of their first vows, to quit all things and live for God alone. The practice was afterwards incorporated in the Constitution of our Society, and has been adopted by numerous religious Congregations. It has been found so productive of good results that it ought to encourage all to perform the same most fervently.

*POINT II.* What are the purposes of this renovation?

1. It confirms and reasserts the total dedication of ourselves to the service of God; as Holy Church invites her children, when they have attained the age of discretion, to renew by their own act the promises made in their name by their sponsors at Baptism. If any hindrance interfered with the validity of our first vows, the obstacle being now removed, the renovation of the vows gives them permanent force.

2. It may often be more meritorious than the first vows had been, since it is made after the hardships of the religious life have been experienced and are there-

fore more fully realized than before. As the soldier who reenlists in an army shows more devotedness to its cause than he did by first joining the ranks of the army.

3. Since the vows act as a second Baptism, removing all sin and all punishment due to sin, and this precious effect is ascribed by St. Thomas Aquinas to the perfect charity which the vows imply, the same results may naturally be expected whenever the vows are renewed with the same good will. And this same good will is most apt to be present at the semi-annual renovation of the vows.

4. As the religious vows entitle the soul to a rich supply of actual graces that it may be faithful to their observance, so the earnest renovation of the same secures a new supply of such Divine aid to advance steadily in the pursuit of sanctity.

5. Every act of virtue increases the measure of our eternal happiness, especially acts of heroic virtue; the loving renovation of the vows is sure to add each time a rich jewel to our heavenly crown. Taking the religious vows generously has always a touch of the heroic about it.

6. Each renovation of the vows strengthens our resolves, and clamps us more firmly to God. It often takes many a blow to drive in a nail and make it stick with firmness, so with our virtuous resolutions.

*POINT III. What are we expected to do during this triduum?*

We must aim at a thorough renovation of the religious spirit; and for this purpose generous souls will

devise various means. But to a certain extent our Society undertakes to direct our efforts by describing certain definite practices, which must be faithfully used by all. They are clearly marked out in the Letter of Father Vincent Caraffa: 1. Avoiding all unnecessary intercourse with the outside world; 2. Observing a strict silence, even during the times of the ordinary recreations; 3. Half an hour's reading daily of a practical spiritual book. 4. Making two earnest meditations daily, one of them before the Blessed Sacrament exposed; 5. Examining one's spiritual progress for half an hour every day; 6. A general confession of the last six months; 7. A public self-accusation of faults in the refectory; 8. A clear account of conscience to the superior. If all this is observed and performed in the right spirit, much profit will result.

*Colloquy.* Offer good resolutions, and ask further light and grace to correct all faults.

### MEDITATION III

#### WHAT KIND OF MEN DOES OUR VOCATION REQUIRE?

*1st Prelude.* Imagine Christ says to you: "I have given you an example" (St. John xiii, 15).

*2nd Prelude.* Pray to understand this great truth and to imitate that glorious model.

*POINT I.* Consider that the men required by our vocation are to be like to Christ: "Whom God foreknew he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his Son" (Rom. viii, 29). A parable

will explain this. A very rich man had an only son, a model of every virtue and adorned with every human accomplishment. He devoted a large portion of his fortune to educate a number of other boys that should be fit companions for that son as like to him as possible. Thus God is treating all His elect, and in particular the members of the Society of Jesus. That is the very purpose for which St. Ignatius was inspired to found our Society and to give us his Constitution. We are destined to be perfect images of Christ.

*POINT II. Consider some special points of resemblance that the Lord requires of us.* We must be:  
1. *Like Christ in our outward behavior*, so that He may appear reflected or reproduced in each one of us. That is the purpose of our Rules of Modesty, to which St. Ignatius was taught by the Holy Ghost to attach more than usual importance. Do we observe them faithfully? If we do not, it is because we fail to realize fully the ideal of our founder, which was nothing less than the image of the Son of God.

2. *Like Christ in our inner sentiments*, in compliance with His own invitation: There is so much meaning in His words inviting us to this special manner of imitation: "Learn of me because I am meek and humble of heart" (St. Matth. xi, 29). These two virtues are so conspicuous in our Divine model.

*Meekness* is emblemized by the gentlest of animals, the tender lamb; and Christ was figured in the Old Testament by the sacrifice of the lamb, and proclaimed in the New Testament by St. John the Baptist with the words: "Behold the Lamb of God" (St. John i, 29).



This is not the characteristic virtue of a warrior, such as St. Ignatius had been; but he had laid aside that garment of his youth and instead had put on Christ, as St. Paul teaches us to do, saying:

“Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. xiii, 14). We must do the same. *Humility* is most conspicuous throughout the life of Christ; it must be the foundation of all our spiritual life: “He emptied himself, taking the form of a servant” (Phil. ii, 7).

3. *Like Christ in our practical reason*, taking God’s view of all things, in opposition to the views of the world. The whole outlook on life of a good religious is very different from the outlook of the worldling. Therefore the world hates us: “If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you” (St. John xv, 19). How can we acquire this unworldly spirit, which is the spirit of Christ? By meditation, spiritual reading, all manner of prayer, recollection, spiritual conversation, etc. Are we making earnest efforts on these lines? Do we avoid profane reading as far as our labors allow? Novels and newspapers are full of the spirit of the world, and so is unnecessary conversation with most seculars.

4. *Like Christ in our wills*, which should be ever intent on promoting the glory of God and ever zealous to procure the salvation of souls. Our zeal should cause us to labor hard, wherever an opportunity can be found to further the great purpose of our Society, the greater glory of God.

*Colloquy* with our dear Lord, asking for light and grace to make ourselves more like unto Himself.

## MEDITATION IV

### CHRIST IS HERE TO HELP US

*1st Prelude.* Realize the fact that Christ is present on the altar, and hear Him say: "Behold, I am with you all days" (St. Matth. xxviii, 20).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask for a lively faith in Christ's presence in our midst, and a firm confidence in His loving assistance.

*POINT I. In what sense is Christ present on the altar?*

1st. *Substantially*, personally, body and soul, God and Man. Make a firm act of faith, adore Him, lovingly thank Him.

2nd. *As our helper*: "Come to me, all ye that labor and are burthened, and I will refresh you" (St. Matth. xi, 28). He will help us in attaining the purpose for which He has brought us to the Society, to perfect our souls and to save others; in particular to bless the work of this renovation of spirit. In Him we can do all things: "I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv, 13). Ask eagerly for a thorough renovation. Examine whether your visits are fervent enough.

*POINT II. What treasure do we possess in the holy Mass?*

No one but God could have conceived the blessing

granted to the faithful of being present in their successive generations at the mystical renovation of the sacrifice of the cross. There, before us, day after day, the same Redeemer of the world who made Himself the victim of expiation of our sins on Calvary, makes Himself a victim again in the same sacrifice, and offers Himself to His eternal Father, as truly as He did then, to obtain for those present in particular the graces they desire from His liberality. No prayer could be more powerful than the holy Mass. If only we duly enter into the spirit of it, a spirit of deep reverence, of eager supplication, of lively confidence, the daily Mass cannot fail to be for us a copious source of the choicest blessings. Whenever we find ourselves in some special need of God's assistance, let us offer or hear Mass for that purpose. The result will not always be visible, but it will probably often be so, and it will always be very real.

How do we profit daily by this wondrous grace? It will be an important gain towards the renewing of spirit if we improve our manner of attendance at holy Mass.

*POINT III. What do we receive in Holy Communion?*

We receive God Himself, no greater gift is possible. And we receive Him as our food; that is, coming to do for our soul what food does for the body, giving it strength and growth, and keeping it from corruption. Each worthy Communion increases in us sanctifying grace, gives us an additional supply of actual grace to

lead holy lives, and, as the Council of Trent declares, it frees us from venial sins and preserves us from falling into mortal sins.

But the amount of grace received in Holy Communion depends in great part on our own dispositions. We can greatly increase it by making careful preparation for the reception of our Lord, by fervor at the moment of reception, reciting firm acts of faith in the Divine presence, humble acts of adoration, acts of ardent love and of eager desire and petitions for Divine graces. The time of thanksgiving after Holy Communion contains some of the most precious moments of the day. How do I profit by this golden opportunity to enrich my poor soul? Can I improve my ways in this respect? We read in the Life of St. Alphonsus Rodriguez written by a lay brother (pp. 81, 82), that on All Saints' Day, 1612, after he had received Holy Communion amid the Scholastics and Brothers of the community, Christ "showed him in a sensible manner His presence in the hearts of all those who had just received Him, so that he perceived the Saviour resplendent with glory whole and entire in each religious." Thus Christ is really present in each of us during those precious moments. Can we not give Him a more loving and honorable reception than we often do?

*Colloquy* with our dear Lord, asking eagerly for light and grace, and laying before Him special resolutions and earnest supplications that we may improve.



## MEDITATION V

## THE HOLY GHOST SANCTIFIES US

*1st Prelude.* Listen to the words of Christ: "I will ask the Father and he shall give you another Paraclete" (St. John xiv, 16).

*2nd Prelude.* "Come, O Holy Ghost, replenish the hearts of Thy faithful."

*POINT I.* It is a great consolation to us to remember that we are not expected to work out our perfection by our own power.

*The Holy Ghost is to be the principal agent in this work of sanctification;* for St. Paul wrote: "The charity of God (and this is sanctity) is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given to us" (Rom. v, 5). See what He did in the Apostles, in the early Christians generally, what he has done in all the Saints, in the faithful throughout the ages, and in particular in religious, whom He has selected and separated from the world to make them masterpieces of holiness. Conceive eager desires of His gifts and a firm confidence in His assistance. Beg earnestly for His light and grace to advance in virtue.

*POINT II.* *How does the Holy Ghost sanctify us?* Not in a miraculous way, in which He sanctified the Apostles, but by a gradual process: 1. By the Sacraments, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance He has been working in our souls from our early infancy. Make earnest acts of thanksgiving, for these Divine graces already received. 2. By our spiritual

exercises, our meditations, attendance at Mass, examinations of conscience, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, spiritual readings, vocal prayers of various kinds; during which the Spirit of God enlightens us, suggests holy resolutions, encourages and strengthens us to make generous sacrifices.

Thus we have gradually been formed, to some extent, into spiritual men. If we are not yet more spiritual, it is because we did not sufficiently comply with the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, but resisted His efforts to sanctify us further, like those to whom St. Stephen said: "You always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so you do also" (Acts vii, 51). 3. The Spirit of God sanctifies us by assisting all our efforts to advance in virtue, aiding us to believe, to hope, to love God, to practise charity to the neighbor, humility, prudence, mortification, etc.

*POINT III. All this influence of the Holy Ghost requires our cooperation.* The best teacher cannot make a scholar of a careless boy. Cardinal Manning in his Internal Mission of the Holy Ghost has a passage explaining this point very forcibly. He says: "No grace that God gives ever fails of its effect, except through our fault. The seed that falls upon the barren sand can bear no fruit; that which is cast upon the sea cannot cast a root; that which falls upon a mind which is like the troubled sea, or upon a heart which is like the barren sand, will bear no spiritual fruit. Nevertheless the grace of God in itself is always fruitful; it never fails of its effect unless we mar it. Are you then corresponding with the exuberant graces

which God is always bestowing upon you? . . . Learn then to have a delicate conscience, to understand promptly, and to correspond, if you can, proportionately; not to receive great graces languidly, and squander one-half of them, and correspond faintly with the rest. Try with your whole soul and strength to rise up and to obey, when the grace of God calls you to any higher state or to any better action" (Pages 32 and 33). Yet, whatever our natural disposition may be, by the aid of the Holy Ghost we may become diligent and fervent in the pursuit of every virtue; for, as St. Paul says: "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmity. For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit himself asketh for us with unspeakable groanings" (Rom. viii, 26). Let us carefully consider what we must improve on this occasion.

*Colloquy with the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, begging for light and grace to advance rapidly in holiness.*

## MEDITATION VI

### EFFECTS PRODUCED BY THE HOLY GHOST

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you behold the scene of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, as narrated in Acts ii, 1-4.

*2nd Prelude.* Ask for a liberal infusion of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. We will consider the principal effects produced by the Holy Ghost in the soul as they are expressed in four verses of the *Veni Creator*.

*POINT I.* *Accende lumen sensibus*, "Enlighten our minds." See what a change the Holy Ghost

produced in the minds of the Apostles. They had failed to understand the teaching of the Blessed Saviour. He had said to them: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged and spit upon. And after they have scourged him, they will put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again." And St. Luke adds: "And they understood none of those things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said" (xviii, 31-34). And a little while before Christ's ascension into Heaven the Apostles asked Him: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i, 6). They were still so blinded that they only looked for earthly power. But the Holy Ghost came down upon them, and at once they understood all the meaning of Christ's doctrine.

Ever since that day the same Divine Spirit has been teaching the Church, enlightening the minds of its members, enabling them, not only to give a mental assent to the doctrines proposed, but habitually to take God's view of things. This is done by the faithful generally, even very simple souls, "Thou hast revealed them to little ones" (St. Luke x, 21). This should be done by us, religious, especially, and it should characterize our teaching and the tone of our conversations; while on the other hand, "The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God; for it is foolishness to him and he cannot understand" (I Cor. ii, 14).



*POINT II. Infunde amorem cordibus*, "Infuse Thy love into our hearts." The Love of God is sanctity, and it is a gift of the Spirit of God. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us" (Rom. v, 5). It is the most precious of all gifts and, like every good gift, it is to be obtained by fervent and constant prayer. For "Every best gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights" (St. James i, 17). We are especially encouraged to ask this gift from God, by the fact that Christ Himself assures us that the Lord loves to bestow this treasure on those who eagerly ask for it; for he says:

"How much more will your Father from heaven give the Good Spirit to them that ask him?" (St. Luke xi, 13). Pray for it fervently, on this occasion in particular.

*POINT III. Infirma nostri corporis virtute firmans perpeti*, "Strengthen the weakness of our bodies with lasting power." Give us the virtue of fortitude, an abiding willingness to do and to suffer whatever the service of God may require. This willingness is the test of our love for Him and the chief means of our sanctification. We exercise this willingness by patiently toiling along, suffering checks and contradictions, meeting with disappointments without being disheartened by them, enduring fatigue, pain, regret, shame, etc. We may meet all these trials in the sacred ministry, in the classroom, in humble labor, anywhere; and that not occasionally, but daily, hourly, yet without fretting or murmuring, but cheerfully, joyously, buoy-

antly, scarcely noticing them, but treating them as matters of course in a life of generous sacrifice. St. Augustine points out three degrees of patience. In the lowest degree are those who would rather endure their sufferings than commit sin to escape from them. Those are in the second degree who accept willingly what God sends, simply because God wills it. We ascend to the third degree when we desire to suffer that we may more closely resemble our suffering Lord. This is a special gift of the Holy Ghost, our third degree of humility.

*Colloquy.* Ask earnestly that the Divine Spirit may increase in you all these precious effects.

## TRIDUUM C

### MEDITATION I

#### ON THE NEED OF FREQUENT RENOVATIONS OF SPIRIT

*1st Prelude.* St. Paul writes to the Ephesians: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (iv, 23).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask grace to increase greatly your spirit of fervor.

*POINT I.* It is one of the infirmities of our fallen nature that we are constantly drawn down to sensual and other selfish gratifications; and, to rise heavenward in our desires, we need the exertion of ever renewed efforts. As truly as the clock needs repeated winding up, so the soul needs frequent reminders of the vital truths which cause our lives to be supernatural. For this purpose, St. Ignatius has wisely provided these semi-annual renovations of spirit. If we did not care to renew our spirit of fervor at the proper time, the Lord might do it for us by means far more painful than we imagine. Bitter afflictions brought on individual persons or upon entire bodies of men, even such as are favorites of God, are often intended by Him to purify them from moral stains. Thus, some years before the suppression of our Society, Father Paradiso was instructed by the

Lord to inform Father Ricci, then our Father General, that the calamities which were going to overwhelm us were intended to renew the spirit of humility, of faith and piety in the whole Church. (See B. N.'s "The Jesuits and Their History," Vol. II, Page 179.)

*POINT II.* Another reason for this semi-annual renovation of the spirit of fervor is that our life calls for men of uncommon virtue. The whole history of our Order proves this truth. Every generation of our members has had numerous heroes, conspicuous for their spirit of self-sacrifice. Every generation has had much need of solid virtue on the part of all its members to perform the difficult tasks imposed on them. For the present we are passing through a crisis in the world's history, which calls for the most patient endurance of ills, and the most generous spirit of sacrifice, that can be expected from brave and faithful men supported by the grace of God. Such virtue as you shall need during your lifetime, if you do not want to disgrace the name you bear, can only be acquired by leading a life of prayer, and by the ever faithful performance of your duties, no matter what sacrifices they may require.

*POINT III.* The purpose for which we have entered on this career is well worthy of all the sacrifices it may demand of us. No grander purpose can be conceived. God Himself never holds out a higher aim than that which we are vowed to labor for, namely most perfect happiness for ourselves and for a countless multitude of other souls. In fact, the aim of our lives is identical with that for which the Son of God



came down from Heaven, and toiled and suffered upon earth, namely the procuring of the greater glory of God; *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*.

We could not have entered upon this grand career if the Lord had not given us extraordinary graces to do so. He has deigned to make the sacrifices implied in it comparatively easy and full of consolations; and if only we keep up our trust in Him, He will make the rest of our lives flow on in the same even current of loving worship. They will not be lives of ease and earthly comforts; far from it. They will be successions of sacrifices, as was the life of Christ. But he rides smoothly along whom the grace of God carries onward, *facile equitat quem gratia Dei portat*; and we shall be cheered on at every step by the prospect of eternal bliss: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going they went and wept, casting their seeds; but coming they shall come with joyfulness, carrying their sheaves" (Ps. 125).

*Colloquy.* Ask earnestly for a thorough renovation of the spirit of generous service, which is to be the fruit of this triduum.

## MEDITATION II

### SIN THE CHIEF HINDRANCE TO OUR PROGRESS

*1st Prelude.* Imagine Christ speaks to you from the tabernacle and says: "You are my friends if you do the things that I command you" (St. John xv, 14).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask for copious light and grace to observe God's commandments perfectly.

*POINT I. Consider how much we ought to hate even the smallest sin.*

In our first meditation we considered the grand purpose for which we live, the attainment of eternal bliss for ourselves and others and the greater glory of God. Now sin is the greatest obstacle in our way; it bars our road to Heaven and directly insults our Lord. The condition of Christ's friendship is the observance of His commandments: "You are my friends if you do the things that I command you." To sin is to break those commandments. If it does not always turn us against God, it at least displeases Him. Even a venial sin is a greater evil than any temporal loss. We should rather die than wilfully commit one.

This disposition is the second degree of humility, on which we resolve to live in every good retreat. To it Christ lovingly invites us, saying: "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved by my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. . . . If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my word" (St. John xiv, 21-24).

*POINT II. Consider the principal causes of sins.*

I. One general cause is our thoughtlessness; we are unmindful of the great truths of religion, the supernatural light of which is allowed to grow dim amid the distractions of a busy or a frivolous life. Ecclesiasticus warns us, saying: "In all thy works remember

thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (vii, 40). Now the remedy of this thoughtlessness is provided for us in our spiritual exercises: our meditations, examinations of conscience, spiritual readings, etc. The religious who is accustomed to perform these faithfully and fervently is not likely to commit many sins, and he will gradually become more and more virtuous.

2. Another copious source of sins consists of unmortified passions. When any passion is aroused, it blinds us to the dictates of reason and the whisperings of grace. You see this in the conduct of an angry man: he says and does things which he is afterwards ashamed of and sorry for. It is so with all unrestrained passions. Consider what are your most frequent faults and what are their causes. What passions need particularly to be watched and checked. The triduum is just the time for self-introspection, examinations of conscience, and for the ordering of our spiritual exercises.

*POINT III. Consider some faults in particular, against which a religious should be guarded.*

1. Violation of fraternal charity, whether in word or thought; ever remember the words of Christ: "Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me" (St. Matth. xxv, 40).

2. Irreverence in prayer: disrespectful posture, wilful or careless wandering of the mind, want of proper preparation, etc.

3. Sensuality in food and drink, or in the indulgence of superfluous sleep.

4. Immodesty of touch or look, effeminate softness of manner or language, imprudent familiarity.

5. Human respect, more anxiety to please men than to please the Lord, and therefore doing or saying what is unlawful or imprudent, or omitting to do what conscience dictates to be our duty.

*Colloquy.* Earnestly beg pardon for faults committed and resolve to avoid the occasions of sin.

### MEDITATION III

#### FIDELITY IN LITTLE THINGS

*1st Prelude.* Behold Christ occupied in simple manual labor.

*2nd Prelude.* Ask the grace of understanding the value in God's sight of perfect fidelity in even the least observances.

*POINT I.* *What is meant by fidelity in little things?* It means such fidelity in doing God's will on all occasions as to neglect no details, even the least important. What is there in those details that makes them precious? It is their conformity to the will of God. That is what Christ valued in them. The greatest things on earth are insignificant trifles in the sight of God; but the least act of conformity to God's will has a Divine worth, and therefore is more precious than any merely natural performance. Faith teaches us to appreciate this truth; Christ came to enforce it by the example of His private life. How do I act in this matter? Am I habitually faithful in ob-



serving all my rules, even those which seem to be of less importance?

*POINT II. Consider the importance of such fidelity.*

1. This fidelity is a necessary precaution against the commission of great faults. For Ecclesiasticus tells us: "He that contemneth small things shall fall by little and little" (xix, 1). And our Blessed Saviour teaches: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in that which is greater; and he that is unjust in that which is little is unjust also in that which is greater" (St. Luke xvi, 10). Thus small faults in the matter of charity, poverty, sensuality, chastity, etc., gradually lead to grievous sins. No one becomes at once a great sinner or a great saint.

*Nemo repente fit summus*, says the old proverb. Before Judas sold our Lord for thirty pieces of silver, he had accustomed himself to lesser acts of injustice, as St. John tells us, saying of him that "he was a thief, and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein" (xii, 6).

2. Our lives are mostly made up of minor acts, as were the private lives of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, and countless Saints. A Martyr's crown in Heaven may consist of one brilliant gem, the ruby of his heroic death; but the crowns of most Saints are made up of countless sparkling little diamonds, each the reward of fidelity in a little thing. Thus too in human things, in which perfection depends on minor details. For instance, the politeness of the man who is to the manner

born is not displayed in extraordinary actions, but in that delicate tact which makes him know his place, so that he never acts amiss, and always says the right word and does the right thing at the right time. This fidelity is, in spiritual things, what good taste is in literature and the other fine arts. Masterpieces differ from common works in the perfection of the least details; for instance, in sculpture, painting, etc., etc.

*POINT III.* It is by fidelity in minor matters that we acquire the solid virtues needed to perform heroic deeds when the occasion calls for them. This is brought about in two ways.

1. *Naturally.* Our conduct on all occasions, even the most important, depends to a great extent on the good or evil habits we have acquired. Now habits are acquired by the frequent repetition of acts. It is only in little things that actions can be frequently repeated; for few of us have numerous opportunities to do great things. Therefore our habits, good or bad, are ordinarily the result of our fidelity or infidelity in little things.

2. *Supernaturally.* Acts of virtue practised by us obtain for us additional actual graces to practise yet more acts of virtue: and thus faithful souls constantly strengthen the chain of graces which binds them ever more closely to God. Unfaithful souls forfeit these additional helps of grace that were in store for them; and thus their chain of graces is gradually weakened, so that temptations may occur which cause them serious falls into sin. Examine your daily conduct of fidelity to grace.

*Colloquy*, according to the sentiments evoked by these considerations.

## MEDITATION IV

### THE OBSERVANCE OF OUR RULES

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you see St. Ignatius, as he is often painted, with the book of his Constitutions in his hands.

*2nd Prelude.* Beg through his intercession for a high appreciation of our rules.

*POINT I.* *What are the rules of our Society?* They are a summary of those wonderful Constitutions which the Holy Ghost has used for the conversion and sanctification of countless multitudes of souls during the last four centuries, namely:

1. Of the numerous members of our Society during the successive generations, so many of whom have given evident proofs of having attained heroic sanctity.

2. Of vast numbers of other persons of the clergy and the laity who have been saved and sanctified by the virtues and the labors of the members of our Society.

*POINT II.* Why are these rules so productive of sanctity?

1. Because they are not merely human work; for St. Ignatius, in writing his Constitutions, obtained by fervent prayer the special assistance of the Holy Ghost. This is evident from the history of the Saint. (For instance, Genelli's "Life of St. Ignatius," p. 248).

2. Because they lead the way to the perfect imitation of Christ. By his Spiritual Exercises St. Ignatius makes us conceive the most lofty ambition that can be aroused within the human heart, namely to make itself comformable to the heart of Jesus; and by his rules he guides us through all the details of our earthly career to the realization of this lofty purpose.

*POINT III. How do our rules accomplish this end?* By animating all our actions with the spirit of the three highest virtues: of Faith, Hope and Charity.

1. They aid us to lead *a life of faith*. For whenever we observe a rule, we thereby elicit an act of faith, accepting the letter of the rule or the word of our superior as the expression of the Divine will. Our life is thus made to consist of a succession of supernatural acts.

2. They make us live *a life of hope*. He that follows his own judgment leans on a fragile reed; but he that acts because the rules prescribe a certain course thereby trusts God more than his own reasoning and thus hopes in the help of God. He shall not be disappointed.

3. They perfect in us *the love of God*. For they constantly prescribe what tends to the greater glory of God: *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam*.

Do I observe all my rules faithfully? Does any of them cause me a special difficulty? Perhaps I do not understand it well; all of them, if rightly understood, are most reasonable.

*Colloquy* with our dear Lord, asking for great fidelity to observe all our rules.



## MEDITATION V

## ZEAL FOR SOULS

*1st Prelude.* Hear Christ saying: "I am come to cast fire on the earth; and what will I but that it be kindled?" (St. Luke xii, 49).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask earnestly that this fire be enkindled in your heart and that you may help to spread it far and wide.

*POINT I. That fire is Divine Charity.* It is poured forth into the hearts of men by the Holy Spirit who is given to us (Rom. v, 5). It makes us lead a supernatural life, the life of children of God, and in this sense a Divine life. As the vegetable life transforms the clod of earth into the fairest flower and the most luscious fruit; as animal life turns the food into the wonderful organism of the human body; so the life of grace gives to our acts a heavenly value. By it sinners become saints, true children of God. Christ shows intense earnestness in spreading this fire, which is really His greatest work: the most Divine of all Divine works is the salvation of souls. The Angels are ministering spirits to aid in this task. All human efforts are children's play in comparison with this. To save a soul is a grander achievement than to conquer an empire.

*POINT II. This sublime work is done chiefly through the agency of men.* Its great promoter was the God-man Himself, the Son of God incarnate. But He has deigned to associate to Himself the Apos-

tles and their successors, the bishops and priests of His Church, till the end of time; to whom He has said: "Going therefore teach ye all nations . . . and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (St. Matth. xxviii, 19, 20). With these the Lord has associated in a special manner, through the mission of His Church, various apostolic Orders of religious, our own Society in particular: "I have chosen you and have appointed you that you should go and should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (St. John xv, 16).

When Christ first addressed these words to a few poor fishermen, how unlikely it was that the promise should be fulfilled? Yet it has been most wonderfully verified. So it will be in our case also if we trust in God. Yet two thirds of mankind are still pagans. Zeal is needed.

*POINT III. What must we do to spread the love of God?* We need not do any novel thing; we must follow the beaten path, travel along the highroad of our religious life. *Age quod agis*; perform your daily duties; but do everything well, to the best of your power.

In particular realize in your conduct that,

1. *You are to be the light of the world.* For this purpose you must form your intellect upon the teachings of Christ. Master His views of time and eternity, by earnest meditations, sound readings, recollection, much prayer. Do not contract false views of life by following false guides, reading worldly authors extensively, imbibing their spirit. The light that is

in you, your intimate convictions, will necessarily shine around you, through your language, through your conduct. If you are thoroughly religious, real Jesuits, it will be the light of Christ, and will truly enlighten the portion of the world where Providence will place you. If your views are false, you will not do God's work.

2. *You are the salt of the earth*; incorrupt yourselves, you must keep others from corruption. This requires pure and holy affections of the heart, soundness of the will. If we Jesuits, with our training do not live innocent and holy lives, what remedy can we find? "If the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men" (St. Matth. v, 13). These words were spoken by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, when He was laying down the platform of His campaign for the conquest of the world to the Kingdom of His Father. We are soldiers in that campaign. How worthy is our conduct of such a cause and such a King.

*Colloquy* with our Divine Lord, promising fidelity and zealous exertions in this lofty vocation.

## MEDITATION VI

### DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN

*1st Prelude.* See the Blessed Virgin exalted in Heaven, surrounded by the Saints and the Blessed of our Society.

*2nd Prelude.* Beg for an increase of devotion to

her, invoking her under the title of Queen of the Society of Jesus.

*POINT I. Why is all the Church so devoted to Mary?* Because God wishes to be honored by man especially in connection with the grandest exhibition of His love for man, the mystery of the Incarnation. Now in this mystery Mary holds a most prominent place; she is the key to the proper understanding of it. Besides, as Jesus was given to mankind through Mary, so through her He is given to individual souls. Therefore the Church salutes her as "Mother of Divine Grace"; and many holy writers say that every grace comes to all individual souls through her intercession.

*How do we know that God is pleased with so great a devotion to Mary?*

1. From the constant teaching of the Church, which has applied to her such texts as these: "He that shall find me shall find life and shall have salvation from the Lord" (Prov. viii, 35); "They that work by me shall not sin" (Ecclus. xxiv, 30); etc.

2. From the Doctors of the Church, who have exhausted all their resources of learning to inculcate this devotion. Such are Sts. Augustine, Bernard, Liguori, Anthoninus, Bonaventure, etc.

3. From the workings of the Holy Ghost, who has fostered this devotion in the lives of numberless Saints and of other highly favored servants of God, as well as in the practice and prayers of the Church itself, and the unanimous teachings of her theologians.

4. From so many miracles performed through the invocation of the Blessed Virgin in every land.



*POINT II. What part has our Society taken in fostering this devotion?*

1. A most conspicuous part. For instance St. Ignatius ascribes his conversion to the vision he had of her, he made himself her Knight at Montserrat, he makes us meditate on her and pray to her in our retreats.

2. In the life and death of St. Stanislaus, St. Berchmans, St. Alphonsus, St. Francis Hieronymo and, in fact, all her Saints and her great men generally.

3. In her zeal to propagate devotions to Mary by means of her Sodalities, her devotions of the month of Mary, and countless writings of her ablest men. No one is considered as a worthy member of our Order who has not a marked devotion to Mary. How do I strive to honor her? Is there any practice that I used to perform in her honor that I have gradually abandoned? What improvement can I make in this respect?

*POINT III. In what does devotion to Mary chiefly consist?* It is an acquired habit, the result of countless acts of ours in compliance with the grace of God. Such are:

1. The devout celebration of her festivals, preparing for them by novenas and continuing them by the celebration of their octaves;

2. The daily recitation of the Rosary, or at least of the third part of it, the Beads, of the Litany of the Blessed Virgin and the Office of her Immaculate Conception;

3. The wearing of her scapular of Mount Carmel, and of medals blessed in her honor;

4. The recitation of set prayers to her at rising in the morning and retiring at night, at the sound of the Angelus bell, morning, noon and night;

5. Fervent invocations during the day, especially at the approach of temptations;

6. Reading and meditation on her prerogatives;

7. Conversing on the same, or in any way promoting her devotion. We can render no greater service to any one than to make him devout to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Are we doing as much as we can in this respect?

*Colloquy with Mary, asking her guidance to learn to love her more and to lead many others to love her.*

## TRIDUUM D

### MEDITATION I

#### THE PURPOSE OF THIS TRIDUUM

*1st Prelude.* Vividly picture to yourself St. John Berchmans at his prayer.

*2nd Prelude.* Beg for copious grace to imitate his spirit of fervor.

*POINT I.* Consider that in the sight of God *men differ from one another only according to their interior dispositions: Omnis gloria filæ regis ab intus*, "All the glory of the King's daughter is within" (Ps. 44). It matters nothing whether a person be rich or poor, learned or ignorant, man or woman, old or young, refined or uncultured, etc. We are apt to forget this and to trust in some natural superiority, as the world does. The Lord said to His prophet Samuel: "I do not judge according to the look of man; for man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart" (I Kings xvi, 7). The right view of ourselves will be one of the great disillusionments at death. Let us now strive to view ourselves as we are in God's sight.

*POINT II.* Consider this truth in special examples, comparing a St. Alphonsus Rodriguez with an ordinary Jesuit, a Brother, a Father or a Scholastic. How similar outside. How different within. Com-

pare a St. John Berchmans, a St. John Francis Regis with a Passaglia, a Tyrrell, etc., a mere boy, like St. Stanislaus, with a veteran religious of the ordinary cast. This interior proper disposition of which the Psalmist sings is apt to promote devotion, which St. Francis De Sales describes as follows: "Devotion is nothing else but that spiritual agility and vivacity by which charity works in us, or we by her, with alacrity and affection; and as it is the business of charity to make us observe all God's commandments generally and without exception, so it is the part of devotion to make us observe them cheerfully and with diligence. . . . Devotion is the pleasure of pleasures, the queen of virtues, and the perfection of charity. If charity be milk, devotion is the cream; if charity be plant, devotion is the flower; if charity be a precious stone, devotion is its lustre; if charity be a rich balm, devotion is its fragrance, yea the odor of sweetness which comforts men and rejoices Angels" ("Devout Life," chapter 1, 2). Do I cultivate this disposition in my heart with proper earnestness?

*POINT III. Consider that the purpose of the triduum is to renew this devotion within our hearts, its purity and its energy. Consider that God Himself affords this opportunity, and invites you to profit by it. His grace is ready to help you. What must you do during these three days? Our Society lays the observances before you which you are expected to follow. In her name Father Vincent Caraffa says to you: "Let each one, leaving alone all literary studies (except the work prescribed) apply himself exclu-*



sively to the improvement of the spirit. Certain practices in particular are pointed out, namely perfect silence as far as possible, half an hour daily of truly devout reading, half an hour likewise of earnest examination of conscience, special meditations on the renewal of the spirit of piety, a manifestation of conscience, a confession of the faults committed since the last renovation and a public accusation of defects.

Remember in all this the saying of St. Ignatius: "The more generous we shall show ourselves towards God, the more generous we shall find God towards us, and the more fit we shall daily be to receive in greater abundance His graces and spiritual gifts.

*Colloquy.* Ask eagerly and confidently for the grace of making a fervent triduum.

## MEDITATION II

### THE INTERIOR SPIRIT

*1st Prelude.* Imagine Christ speaks to you from the tabernacle, offering to be your teacher in the spiritual life.

*2nd Prelude.* Beg of our dear Lord to teach you in what consists the interior spirit which is to be renewed during the triduum.

*POINT I.* *In what consists that interior spirit?* It is described in Holy Writ under the name of "Wisdom," and the entire book called "Wisdom" is occupied in praising and explaining it. For instance, its seventh chapter says: "I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came upon me, and I preferred her

before kingdoms and thrones, and esteemed riches nothing in comparison of her. . . . Now all good things came to me together with her. . . . She is an infinite treasure to men, which they that use become the friends of God, being commended for the gift of discipline" (vii, 7-14).

Wisdom is the virtue by which we direct our acts by the best means to the best end, which is the end for which we were created, the glory of God. This is the spirit of our Society, "All for the Greater Glory of God." And this is the spirit which we must renew within us by the exercises of the triduum. It regards the purpose or intention for which we act, and therefore it is called "the interior spirit."

*POINT II. What is opposed to the interior spirit?*  
Two classes of faults are opposed to this interior spirit,

1. Those by which we seek sinful gratifications,
2. Those which simply fail to direct our actions to our supernatural end. Supposing that we are careful to avoid all wilful sin, let us consider how we can be wanting in the interior spirit. There are various ways: (a) We may be actuated in many of our actions by the love of praise, not seeking to please God but to please ourselves. Of course all that is done for a merely natural purpose is so much labor lost for eternity: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven (St. Matth. vi, 1). Thus a religious, whether a Father, a Scholastic or a Brother, may give great sat-

isfaction to his superiors, to his brethren and to outsiders, and yet have little merit before God.

The country is full of able and energetic teachers, for instance, who work only for earthly rewards.

(b) We may lead a life of mere impulsive energy, getting interested in our work, perhaps to the neglect of higher duties, or we may be drawn by mere natural affections: "If you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this?" (ib. v, 46).

(c) In many of our actions we may be doing mere routine work. If we began the task with a good intention, though we continue it without further thought of the same, this is not mere routine, but may be very meritorious. The danger is that we may waste much time and energy by merely mechanical action without any supernatural intention. Do I strive earnestly to live for God, A.M.D.G.?

*POINT III. What means can I use for this purpose?*

1. Good daily meditations, by which I keep supernatural motives before my mind.

2. Careful examinations of conscience, watching in particular the motives of my actions.

3. Earnest prayer for light and grace steadily to advance in sanctity.

Such prayer is suggested in various parts of the "Book of Wisdom," to which we referred before; for instance, "Give me wisdom, that sitteth by thy throne, and cast me not off from among thy children. For I am thy servant and the son of thy handmaid, a weak

man and of short time, and falling short of the understanding of judgment and laws. For if one be perfect among the children of men, yet if thy wisdom be not with him, he shall be nothing regarded" (ix, 4-6).

*Colloquy.* An earnest petition for grace to renew and increase our interior spirit.

### MEDITATION III

#### THE INTERIOR SPIRIT IS FOSTERED BY FAITH

*1st Prelude.* Recall the words of Christ: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, He that believeth in me hath everlasting life" (St. John vi, 47).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask earnestly for an intense spirit of faith.

*POINT I.* Consider the value of faith in the sight of God.

1. It is one of the theological virtues, which are infused into our hearts by the Holy Ghost: and thus, coming from God they have a Divine efficacy. Therefore whatever action is prompted by faith has supernatural merit, that is deserves an eternal reward. Hence the teaching of Christ: "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life."

2. This value of faith is praised most highly by St. Paul, who devotes to its praise the whole eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, showing how all the Saints of the Old Law were sanctified by their belief in the promised Redeemer.

3. On the part of man, faith is the sacrifice of his



highest faculty, his understanding, to his sovereign Lord. By it we resign our own judgment to accept in its place the word of God.

4. It is also the exercise of the virtue of humility, by which we acknowledge the weakness of our intellect. Now we know that "God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble" (St. James iv, 6).

*POINT II. See how faith sanctifies our daily life:*

1. It keeps before us the Divine presence wherever we be; as a sponge plunged into the sea has water all around it and within the pores of its substance, so we are in God; "For in him we live and move and be" (Acts xvii, 28). Aie, God is still more intimately present to us than the water is to the sponge, for He penetrates every particle of our substance.

2. Faith reveals to us the real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist, with body and soul, humanity and Divinity, teaching us to adore Him, to offer Him as our sacrifice and receive Him as our food.

3. Faith makes us recognize the voice of God in the words of our rules and the directions of our superiors, and thus it makes the details of our religious life full of merit.

4. Faith pierces the guise of misery and frailty, and makes us recognize in every human being the hidden presence of Him who will say at the judgment: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me" (St. Matth. xxv, 40).

Thus faith makes the religious life most meritorious.

*POINT III. Examine yourselves on the practical working of the spirit of faith in your daily life. Consider:*

1. Whether you strive earnestly to practise the presence of God, by frequently remembering Him and honoring Him by some ejaculatory prayer; for instance, at the striking of the clock, or at the signal to begin or end an exercise. If in your own room, offer each new task kneeling to your loving Lord and His Holy Mother.

2. Do you visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently and lovingly, attend Mass devoutly, and receive Holy Communion daily, with proper preparation and thanksgiving?

3. Are you diligent in keeping your rules and docile to the directions of your superiors? Or do you criticise their orders, thereby showing that you fail to recognize in them the voice of God?

4. Do you treat all your brethren with generous charity, seeing in them so many images of Christ? Or do you take a merely human view of them, being very fond of some and cold towards others, as worldlings treat one another? Do you endeavor to benefit and console all those in need or in sorrow?

The days of the renovation of spirit offer a golden opportunity to examine the motives of all our actions, valuing them all according to the teachings of faith.

*Colloquy* with our dear Lord, begging for much light and grace to lead a life of lively faith, and thus to be thoroughly renewed in spirit.

## MEDITATION IV

## THE INTERIOR SPIRIT IS FOSTERED BY HOPE

*1st Prelude.* Recall the words of the Psalmist: "Trust in the Lord, and do good. . . . Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart" (Ps. 36).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask for a lively confidence in the help of God to lead a holy and successful life.

*POINT I.* *The virtue of hope inspires lofty aspirations.* All men must hope for such graces from God as will enable them to attain the ends to which they are called. But as religious, and as Jesuits we are certainly called to attain perfection for ourselves and abundant fruit in the souls of others. Unless a Jesuit aims at these two objects, he falls below the mark of his vocation; He is a spiritual abortion. All other aims are trivial in comparison. That we are called to this twofold success is declared by the second rule of the Summary; and therefore the words of Christ are meant for us: "I have chosen you and have appointed you that you should go and should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain" (St. John xv, 16). This lofty aim is the spirit of our vocation. It is fostered by the virtue of hope.

*POINT II.* *The virtue of hope gives us confidence of success.* The sanctification of our own soul and of many others is certainly above the power of any man. If therefore we had not the help of God for this purpose, we could not attain this effect. But with the

help of God we can do wonders: "I can do all things in him who strengthened me" (Phil. iv, 13). Two sentiments must combine in me for the purpose: an intimate conviction of my total inability to save souls, and a firm confidence in the power and goodness of God to effect this result through my weakness: "The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the strong; and the base things of the world and the things that are contemptible hath God chosen, and things that are not, that he might bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his sight" (I Cor. i, 27-29). The more humble our opinion of ourselves and the more lively our confidence in God, the more earnest no doubt will be our efforts to sanctify ourselves and others, and thus the more we shall foster in us the spirit of our vocation.

*POINT III. To attain supernatural results we must trust in the use of supernatural means.* All the Philosophy of the world cannot convert a Pagan; nor all theology a Protestant, nor all literature a sinner. Conversion and sanctification are the work of grace. Now grace is obtained by prayer, by sacrifice, self-immolation, mortification. This lesson our dear Lord teaches us with much emphasis, saying: "Amen, amen I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (St. John xii, 24, 25). The minister of God is like a grain of wheat; as the wheat must be cast into the moist and hot furrow and corrupt before it can produce a new and fertile plant, so God's minister must not spare himself,



but be mortified and suffer debasement before he can produce abundant fruit in souls. Still remember that study and work, when done for supernatural motives, become thereby supernatural means, and are then as good as prayer, and often better than prayer. For whoever would neglect his appointed tasks to give extra time to prayer would not please the Lord. Hard work in the service of God is our habitual duty; through it we must sanctify ourselves and others. One of the sayings attributed to St. Ignatius is: "Work as if all your successes were going to depend on your own efforts; and trust in God as if all depended on Him, nothing on yourself." And of course where all depends on the infinite power and goodness of God, we may expect abundant fruit.

*Colloquy* with our dear Lord, begging for a lively hope in His assistance.

## MEDITATION V

### THE INTERIOR SPIRIT IS FOSTERED BY CHARITY

*1st Prelude.* See the glorified members of our Society around Jesus in Heaven, looking down on us with tender affection.

*2nd Prelude.* Beg for a liberal share of the spirit of love.

*POINT I.* Consider that *perfection consists in the love of God*; therefore whatever increases the love of God within us increases our perfection, fosters our interior spirit. To increase this love of God, let us study its excellence: it makes us really friends of

Christ, who said to His Apostles, and says to all who strive to imitate their example: "I will not now call you servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doth. But I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of my Father I have made known to you" (St. John xv, 15). Has not Christ given to the true Jesuit an intimate knowledge of Himself? Does He not treat us all as His true friends, rather than servants? The servant is simply expected to obey orders without knowing the why and the wherefore, without understanding what it is all about. To us Christ has given, through the Exercises of St. Ignatius, a clear insight into the entire plan of sanctification, which even our Brothers and our novices soon get to understand remarkably well. Should we not then highly appreciate this Divine light and faithfully walk in its radiance?

*POINT II. This friendship with God has various degrees of perfection:*

1. The lowest degree of friendship is that which at least avoids all that would so offend a friend as to sever the friendship entirely, and rather turn it into hatred. In case of our friendship with God, this severance is produced by any mortal sin. Of course a true Jesuit commits no mortal sins. Any one who would commit such sins frequently has fallen below the normal standard of religious life.

2. The second degree of friendship excludes all that offends a friend deliberately, with full knowledge and consent, though in a matter of minor importance. This is done by fully deliberate venial sin. This de-

gree of friendship with God should be the normal condition of every good religious.

3. The third degree of friendship strives to avoid all that may displease a friend in any matter whatever, even when there is no question of giving offense. Such is the condition of fervent religious, who observe all their rules with great exactness, even those that do not bind under sin. They do so generously through the spirit of love for their Lord.

4. A fourth degree of friendship exists in those persons who are ever eager to give pleasures to their friends, never sparing any trouble to do so. Examine what is your habitual, or at least predominant disposition towards our good Lord. Do you often offend Him with full knowledge and will? Can you be more generous in doing what will please Him? What improvements can you make?

*POINT III. Consider how friendship is increased.*

1. By thinking frequently of the good qualities of our friend, of the favors he has done us, of the warmth of his affection for us and the proofs he has given us of it. Therefore we meditate on the Person, the life and the sufferings of Christ, His Blessed Mother and the Saints. Can I make my meditations more fervent and more loving? For the same purpose we should read spiritual books and make ourselves familiar with devotional literature, carry on spiritual conversations when it can be done with profit, and collect notes of edifying matters for future use.

2. By emptying our hearts of all human attachments that God may fill them entirely. The Lord is a

jealous lover. Perfect detachment from creatures is the condition of perfect love of God.

3. By making frequent acts of perfect resignation to the Divine will. For friendship between two persons consists mainly in union of wills.

*Colloquy.* Ask earnestly for an increase of love of God, and resolve to avoid all that may hinder it.

## MEDITATION VI

### THE INTERIOR SPIRIT IS FOSTERED BY THE HOLY GHOST

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you hear Christ say: "You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you" (Acts i, 5).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask earnestly that the Holy Ghost may effect in you a thorough renovation of spirit.

*POINT I.* Consider what the Holy Ghost did for the Apostles. Though they had been taught by Christ for three years, they had still understood His doctrine very imperfectly; their affections were still earthly, set on worldly greatness; their dispositions were cowardly. What did they need? A copious infusion of light and strength. We are in a similar situation. They obtained this grace by earnest prayer: "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer" (ib. 14). In due time the effect followed: "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (ib. ii, 4). From that moment they understood all the doctrine correctly; and, after being scourged before the council, "They indeed went from the presence of the council,



rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (ib. v, 41). This was only the beginning of their heroic lives.

*POINT II. Consider what the Holy Ghost does in the Church to-day.* The work of sanctification of the faithful, begun by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, was to be continued till the end of time, and is so continued in us. Just as He has given us sanctifying grace in Baptism, and has constantly increased the same in a multitude of various ways up to the present day, so He is determined to continue this Divine work in our hearts, and to lead us to the practice of all the virtues proper to our state of life.

In particular He wishes to bestow on us the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost. The very name of "Gift" shows that we are not expected to acquire those excellent qualities by our own exertions. They may be compared to the sails attached to a boat, or to the steam or electricity propelling a machine. It is thus the Holy Ghost makes the practice of virtue easy for those who implore His assistance. Have we not all experienced this in many ways? In particular in embracing the religious state? What God has begun in us He will not desist from, provided in the future as in the past we co-operate with His graces.

*POINT III. What co-operation does the Holy Ghost expect from us?* We have seen that the sanctification of the soul comes chiefly from the Holy Ghost. Yet He ordinarily requires our co-operation. In what does this consist?

1. In complying with the inspirations of His grace.

This supposes that we carefully avoid all wilful sins. By mortal sins we would drive Him entirely from our souls; by deliberate venial sins we oppose His work, turning to creatures and attaching ourselves to them, thus opposing His efforts to unite our will with God's, in which union sanctity consists. By indeliberate venial sins also we resist His influence, but to a less degree. Yet we must also strive to diminish their frequency. Then acting on the promptings of grace, we shall perform a multitude of virtuous acts, by which the Holy Spirit will advance us to ever higher sanctity.

2. Our co-operation consists in the second place in the fervor of our prayers, that is in all manner of direct intercourse with God by any of our spiritual exercises, or by aspirations after God or His gifts, uttered in the midst of distracting occupations. For these direct dealings with God are the ordinary means which He provides for the supply of light and strength to the soul, enabling it to lead a fervent and faithful life. Our prayers become all the more efficient in this regard when they are combined with the sacramental graces derived from confession, Holy Communion, the Holy Mass or visits to the Blessed Sacrament.

Am I thus faithfully and fervently co-operating with the influence of the Holy Ghost? What can be improved?

*Colloquy* with the Holy Ghost, asking what efforts He desires on our part, and grace to make those efforts.

## TRIDUUM E

### MEDITATION I

#### PREPARATION FOR THE TRIDUUM

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you see the graveyard of the Novitiate.

*2nd Prelude.* Ask grace to view all things as those buried there view them at present.

*POINT I.* Consider the vast amount of good done by those buried there, the fruit produced in countless souls by their labors in missions, churches, colleges, parochial schools, retreats given, sermons delivered, confessions heard, the last sacraments administered, the sick visited, youths prepared for the priesthood and the religious life, etc., etc. All these results are still spreading farther and wider, like the ripples on a pond and last from generation to generation. And by their faithful observance of rules, the labors borne, the sufferings endured, the penance practiced, their acts of charity, humility, piety, etc., they have also accumulated immense rewards for themselves.

*POINT II.* Consider the heavenly reward now enjoyed by their souls in company with the Saints and the Blessed, with Jesus, Mary and Joseph. How light appear to them now their former sacrifices. How fully they now realize the meaning of these words of

St. Paul: "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us" (Rom. viii, 18). Think also of the multitudes of souls who are now in bliss with them, and who owe their salvation to the labors and prayers of those of our brethren whose remains lie in this sacred ground.

*POINT III. Consider how little is known now of their individual endowments.* To most of the present generation of our younger members few of the names upon those tombstones recall any former memories. All that is now appreciated by their successors is the grand cause for which they lived and died. Their bodily forms, their more or less extensive knowledge, their wit, their poetic power, their eloquence, their taste for music, their talent for mathematics, even the distinguished offices they held, the great services they rendered to the Society and to the Church at large, all, or at least most of this is forgotten by the present generation. And so will be the distinctions which you may acquire during your lifetime to the generations to come. Only that which pleases the eye of God is of real and lasting value. Reflect whether you are not too much in love with temporal distinctions. Resolve to make a thorough self-examination during the three days before you, weighing all concerns in the balance of eternity.

*Colloquy.* Ask light and grace to make an excellent retreat.



## MEDITATION II

## THE FIELD RIPE FOR THE HARVEST

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you hear Christ say: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest that he send forth laborers into his harvest" (St. Matth. ix, 38).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask grace to renew your spirit of zeal for souls.

*POINT I.* The salvation of souls is the most earnest desire of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. It was the purpose for which He came down to earth, which was ever before Him during His private life, His preaching, His sufferings and His death; and it is still the object of His intercession for us in Heaven. For He realizes, better than any one else, the immense interests at stake in saving souls. This is the reason of His infinite self-humiliation, His boundless self-sacrifice.

This grand work He wishes to be continued by His ministers, to whom He says: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." To do this work He has ever since inspired His dearest friends: the Apostles, all missionaries and pastors, numberless Saints in all ages and all lands.

*POINT II.* *This eagerness is as earnest with Him to-day as it ever was.* It is so in particular for this land of ours, where the fields are certainly white for the harvest. And for this work Christ has chosen you: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you; and have appointed you that you should go and

bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain" (St. John xv, 16). It would be a deplorable blindness in us if we failed to understand the importance of the work before us, and not only a sad but a guilty listlessness if we were to set our minds on selfish trifles, and not profit by the golden opportunity offered us to do God's work and labor generously at the salvation of souls every day of our lives. Of course you cannot at the present stage of your religious life, go forth and preach and give missions and bring non-Catholics into the fold, nor are you urged to do things extraordinary.

*POINT III. What can you do in your present circumstances to lead zealous lives? What does God desire of you?*

1. You must acquire thoroughly the spirit of our institute. You are still in the stage of formation to this spirit. Christ had called His first disciples with the words: "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men" (St. Mark i, 17). So He has called you for the same purpose. Yet He did not send them at once to preach; He kept them in training, instructing and directing them. So He is doing with you. Do not pretend to know better than those put over you; do not criticise and murmur at any time; but pray much to obtain fully the spirit of our Society. Do so particularly during this meditation and this whole triduum.

2. Do the tasks entrusted to you with much zeal and devotedness. All the labor in which any Jesuit is employed by his superiors bears, in some way or other, on

the salvation of souls. Do all your tasks in that spirit.

The military recruit, while in training in the barracks, is already serving his country. His duty is to do it well. You are in the service of Christ the King. For His sake do all to the best of your power. If He intrusts to you some care of your neighbor, as He did to His Apostles and the seventy-two disciples during their time of training, remember it is God's work you are doing, as aids to Christ, for the salvation of precious souls. Do it all carefully, faithfully, making generously the sacrifices involved in the performance of your duties.

3. Pray for God's help and His blessings on your labors and on the labors of your brethren. St. Francis Xavier ascribed his wonderful success in pagan lands to the prayers of his brethren in Europe; and no doubt the missionaries of the present day are likewise assisted by the prayers of the whole Society. This is the very Spirit of the Apostleship of Prayer, the zealous exercise of which is sufficient to make you all apostles of the Lord.

*Colloquy.* Lord, what wilt Thou have me do for the great work of saving souls? Speak, O Lord; Thy servant heareth.

### MEDITATION III

#### FRATERNAL CHARITY

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you hear Christ saying: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another" (St. John xiii, 35).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask grace to realize fully the importance of practising fraternal charity.

*POINT I. Consider our strict obligation to observe fraternal charity.*

1. Without it there is no sanctifying grace in the soul. St. John writes: "We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. He that hateth his brother is a murderer" (St. John iii, 14-15).

2. Christ has chosen this commandment as distinctly His own: "A new commandment I give unto you. Love one another as I have loved you" (St. John xiii, 34), and again: "This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you" (ib. xv, 12).

3. He makes its observance the distinctive mark of His disciples: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another" (ib. xiii, 34).

4. Without a delicate fraternal charity many religious communities would contain some very unhappy members. And our Society in particular has always shown the greatest solicitude to protect and foster this virtue.

*POINT II. How may fraternal charity be violated?*

Among religious, violations of charity are not so often committed by actions as they are among seculars, but they are not seldom committed by word or thought. St. James writes: "In many things we all offend. If any man offendeth not in word, the same



is a perfect man" (iii, 2), and again: "The tongue no man can tame, an unquiet evil, a deadly poison" (ib. 8). By calling it a deadly poison, he clearly indicates that the tongue is often the cause of grievous wrong. Now wilfully to inflict a grievous wrong on a neighbor is a grievous sin. But even when the wrong done is of less moment, it is always sinful to some extent. Charity is violated in many ways.

1. By needlessly saying in the hearing of another words that give him pain; and that whether he be our equal or our inferior, and still more if he be our superior.

2. By needlessly making known another's secret faults.

3. By imputing to another a fault he has not committed; this is called calumny, or slander, and is a twofold sin, adding the violation of truth to that of charity.

4. By putting an unfavorable interpretation on a neighbor's conduct, expressing it in words.

5. By condemning him in our minds only, beyond the evidence of the facts; such a judgment is rash, even if it be not false.

6. By needlessly suspecting evil of which there is no good proof.

*POINT III. How we should practise fraternal Charity.*

We must earnestly make up our minds, and act on the conviction all our lives, that the practice of charity is not a mere devotion, highly recommended but not essential for the attainment of solid virtue. St.

Peter writes: "Before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves" (I Pet. iv, 8). Our Divine Lord in His vivid description of the Last Judgment lays the chief stress on the duty of charity, and says: "As long as you did it to one of these my least brethren, you did it to me" (St. Matth. xxv, 40). Again He says: "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you. . . . As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner" (St. Luke vi, 27-31). And He has made our generous disposition to forgive others the condition of our own pardon, teaching us to pray in the Our Father: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us." Through St. Peter He tells us that: "Charity covers a multitude of sins." And what is better still, charity prevents us from committing a multitude of sins. If you can accustom yourself never to say an unkind word of or to another, nor think evil of any one, you are on the highroad to sanctity.

*Colloquy.* Beg of our dear Lord the grace of a generous, delicate and universal charity.

## MEDITATION IV

### THE SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE

*1st Prelude.* Behold the scene on Calvary, as Jesus exclaims: "It is consummated."

*2nd Prelude.* Ask eagerly for the spirit of sacrifice.

*POINT I. Consider that all our blessings have been the result of sacrifices.* When Adam had ruined our race by selfish indulgence, the Son of God restored us to favor by the most tremendous spirit of sacrifice. His blessings to mankind were propagated from land to land and from age to age by men distinguished for the spirit of sacrifice; the Apostles, the Martyrs, the missionaries, the founders of religious Orders, the saintly bishops and priests, to the present day. If we wish to take our share of this glorious task of saving souls, it can only be done by making sacrifices. The minister of Christ who shirks the toils and the privations of his vocation produces little fruit: "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit. . . . If any man minister to me, let him follow me" (St. John xii, 24-26).

*POINT II. The spirit of sacrifice is necessary for our salvation and sanctification.*

1. For our salvation. For a person who is not accustomed to refuse himself many, even lawful, indulgences is very likely to fall into temptations and grievous sins. Therefore Holy Job said: "I made a covenant with my eyes that I would not so much as think upon a virgin" (xxxix, 1). On the other hand, Solomon said of himself: "Whatsoever my eyes desired, I refused them not; and I withheld not my heart from enjoying every pleasure, and delighting itself in the things which I had prepared" (Eccles. ii, 10). The result was that Solomon, "the wise man" by excellence, the special favorite of God at first, fell

afterwards into most grievous sins: "And when he was now old his heart was turned away by women to follow strange gods . . . he worshipped Astarthe . . . and Moloch," etc. (3 Kings xi, 4-8); and it is not certain that he saved his soul. History and constant experience teach, by frequent examples, that the spirit of sacrifice is necessary to secure our salvation. And our Divine Lord declares in express terms that "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away" (St. Matth. xi, 12).

2. This violence, or the spirit of sacrifice, is still more necessary to work out our sanctification. For this is to be achieved by the imitation of Christ, who says: "If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me" (St. Matth. xvi, 24). And it is an axiom of the spiritual life that one advances in virtue in proportion to the violence he does to himself. Therefore the religious life, which is the school of perfection, calls at every step for generous sacrifices in the observance of that multitude of rules whose very purpose is the sanctification of the soul by the spirit and the practice of sacrifice.

*POINT III. How should we practise the spirit of sacrifice?*

1. By carefully observing all our rules. This observance of the rules implies a multitude of self-sacrifices; so that St. John Berchmans declared that the common life was his greatest mortification; and the oration of this Saint's Office exalts him for his fidelity in the service of God.



2. By hard labor in performing the duties imposed on us, especially when these are of an unpleasant kind; for then they require more sacrifice.

3. By rendering all the services we can, even when they are not imposed on us, making ourselves as useful as possible. It is a common saying that what is every man's business is no one's business, and thus many services are neglected. But a good religious rather says: this ought to be done, and no one in particular is appointed to do it; so I must do it.

4. By making all sacrifices cheerfully: "For God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. ix, 7).

*Colloquy.* Ask earnestly for a cheerful spirit of sacrifice.

## MEDITATION V

### BECOME MEN OF PRAYER

*1st Prelude.* Behold Christ rapt in prayer: "He passed the whole night in the prayer of God" (St. Luke, vi, 12).

*2nd Prelude.* Earnestly ask the grace of becoming a man of prayer.

*POINT I.* Consider the importance of praying well.

1. Our life is, or at least ought to be, so very supernatural that it needs an uncommon amount of grace to lead it properly. Now the ordinary condition that God requires to impart His grace is prayer, not so much long prayer as good prayer. If we pray well, we shall undoubtedly receive much grace.

2. Our days are filled up with distracting occupations, so that long hours pass in worldly cares or with profane objects of thought, whose natural tendency is to engross our hearts with worldly affections, and turn them from the Creator to the creature. Prayer, fervent prayer, is the most efficient means to counteract this tendency. Without it we soon lose sight of our highest interests and commit at least venial sins.

3. The good we shall do to the souls of others depends chiefly on prayer; for as St. Ignatius teaches us, it is from the interior that force must flow to the exterior for the end proposed to us (Summary, rule 16).

*POINT II. What aids have we to become men of prayer?*

1. We have the Holy Ghost, who helps us to pray, crying in our hearts "Abba, Father" (Gal. iv, 6). He is certainly ever ready to help us to become men of prayer; for we Jesuits are called to this, since it is our vocation to teach others how to pray, and thus to form spiritual men.

2. We possess a most perfect system of prayer, given us through St. Ignatius in his Spiritual Exercises. This has been a most rich and inexhaustible source of spirituality, as is shown in the works of our writers, and the lives of our Fathers, Scholastics and Brothers through all the periods of our history.

3. All we need to become men of prayer ourselves is diligent application to its practice. To obtain distinguished success in any art or science we need special diligence and a sort of enthusiasm in the practice of that pursuit. He who earnestly wishes to become a

man of prayer,—and we ought all to desire this,—should make it his special ambition to perform all his spiritual exercises to the best of his power, and constantly to ask the Lord for the gift of prayer. What is my conduct in this respect? Am I really in earnest to acquire that science of the Saints? What improvements am I going to make in this matter?

*POINT III. What hinders us from being men of prayer?*

Not our duties, as is the case with most worldlings. For, although, as we have stated before, our outward duties are apt, to some extent, to turn our minds and hearts from God to creatures, enough time for prayer is left us to repair our spiritual strength day by day, provided we perform our meditations, examinations of conscience, etc., with becoming fervor. In fact, our outward labors, if animated by the proper intention, which our spiritual exercises constantly inspire, will be helpful to bring us nearer to God, just as bodily labor helps the food to promote bodily health. But what hinders us from becoming men of prayer is:

1. Indolence, which manifests itself in various ways. We may not prepare the points of meditation over night with proper diligence, or neglect to call them to mind before falling asleep and again at rising in the morning. We may fail to rise promptly and neglect the morning visit to the Blessed Sacrament. We may assume a listless posture during meditation and at other times of prayer, etc.

2. Inordinate passions; such as ambition, vain glory, sensual attachments to persons, etc., which keep

the imagination and the heart busy with other things during the time of prayer.

3. Neglect of direct conversation with God while He is giving us an audience. Prayer supposes that we speak to Him, by acts of adoration, humility, thanksgiving, petition, contrition, intercession, etc. We need not say many things but yet we should speak earnestly all along the time of the exercise, often repeating the same sentiments.

*Colloquy.* Ask for an increase of fidelity and fervor in prayer.

## MEDITATION VI

### THE VINE AND THE BRANCHES

*1st Prelude.* Imagine that Christ speaks to you from the altar, and says: "I am the vine, you the branches: he that abideth in me and I in Him, the same beareth much fruit" (St. John xv, 5).

*2nd Prelude.* Beg to acquire an intimate union with Christ.

*POINT I.* Consider how powerless we are of ourselves to save our souls, and those of other men. For Christ says: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in me" (Ib. xv, 4). The dogma is this: we can do nothing profitable for Heaven, unless we possess sanctifying grace and be helped by actual grace. Now both of these come to us from Christ, who is like the vine that sends forth its sap into the branches and thus gives life and fertility. So too we



cannot save the souls of others by human learning or skill, unless Christ co-operates with us by His grace. Otherwise we are but like sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. If we do not constantly foster this union with God, we waste much labor, as we shall, no doubt, find at our death we have often done.

*POINT II. Consider on the other hand how powerful we are when assisted by the grace of God.* For Christ says: "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." How so? By the Divine power which then makes use of us to do its peculiar work of sanctification for ourselves and others. Christ adds: "In this is my Father glorified, that you bring forth very much fruit" (ib. xv, 8). "I have chosen you and have appointed you, that you should go and should bring forth fruit and your fruit should remain" (ib. v, 16).

Our labors thus become His labors, as the sap of the vine produces the fruit in the branches. Besides, when our will is one with Christ's will, our prayers become most powerful, as He adds, saying: "If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you" (ib. xv, 7).

*POINT III. How do we strengthen this supernatural union with Christ?* He has deigned to tell us this also, saying: "If you keep my commandments, you shall abide in my love; as I also have kept my Father's commandments, and do abide in his love" (xv, 10).

How consoling all this doctrine is! He adds again: "You are my friends if you do the things that I com-

mand you" (xv, 14). All we need do then to achieve the most glorious results for our salvation and that of others is to be obedient to His voice.

*POINT IV. Consider the absolute necessity of this union with Christ.* For He assures us of this, saying: "If any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch and shall wither; and they shall gather him up and cast him into the fire, and he burneth." This is the lot of all who die in mortal sin, no matter how holy they may have been before. Read the 15th chapter of Ezechiel.

*Colloquy.* O Jesus, may this triduum unite me more firmly with Thee. What wilt Thou have me do?

## TRIDUUM F

### MEDITATION I

#### ON THE VOWS

*1st Prelude.* Imagine the scene of your first vows—the ceremony is very simple, the meaning very solemn.

*2nd Prelude.* Ask a full appreciation of the meaning.

*POINT I. Consider the choice made by Jesus.*

1. While on earth Jesus chose His Apostles: “Come ye after me, and I will make you to be fishers of men” (St. Matth. iv, 19); meaning: I will make you my co-laborers in the grandest of all works: “I have chosen you, that you should go and that you should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain” (St. John xv, 16), fruit for eternity. The Apostles could not then realize the honor offered them.

2. Christ meant to make their hearts like to His own in holiness, filling them with love for God and men, generosity, humility, mildness, fidelity, etc.

3. He meant to make them ornaments of Heaven, the twelve great constellations of the celestial Paradise. Then consider that the same Blessed Saviour has chosen you for the same three purposes. Acts of thanks, self-abasement: “I, although most unwor-

thy, prostrate before the feet of thy Divine majesty, etc."

*POINT II. Consider what were your sentiments at the time of your first vows.* They were most earnest and sincere. You were of age, you knew the real meaning, you had been tried, you had full liberty to accept Christ's offers or to refuse them, you were enlightened by the grace of God and supported by His aid.

Yours were solemn words: "I do vow before the most sacred Virgin Mary, and the whole court of Heaven, to Thy Divine Majesty, perpetual Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, etc." These vows effected a solemn consecration of your person, made you sacred, like chalices, their violation a sacrilege. These days are to prepare in you proper sentiments to renew this pledge of a sacred Knighthood, like St. Ignatius's *night watch of arms* at Mont Serrat, really espousals with the Son of God. The breaking of such a contract is horrible before God and men. An unfaithful religious is like a false coin—apparently gold, really brass.

*POINT III. Have we been faithful?* There can be no doubt of our original sincerity. Our self-immolation was sincere and generous; God supported us. Have we been living up to the lofty ideals with which we started out? Thousands before us have done so; thousands are doing so to-day; thousands are being prepared by the Holy Spirit to do the same.

These days are assigned us by our Society to examine carefully how we stand. If we find defects, we



are now to correct them. We must begin the task by a careful self-examination. This is a visit, not of a Father Provincial or Father General, but of the Holy Ghost Himself to the hearts of all.

No doubt you are faithful in many things; see whether you are faithful in all things. Imagine the Holy Spirit addresses you in the words spoken in the Apocalypse to the Bishop of Ephesus, saying: "I know thy works and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them that are evil. . . . And thou hast patience, and hast endured for my name, and hast not fainted. But I have somewhat against thee." Then consider whether you find really in your conduct something that needs special looking after during these three days.

*Colloquy*, according to the sentiments thus excited in your mind.

## MEDITATION II

### THE VOW OF CHASTITY

*1st Prelude.* See Christ in Heaven surrounded by a bright crowd of intimate friends (Apoc. vii, 9).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask for the most delicate purity of heart.

*POINT I.* Chastity is a most precious treasure. It was bestowed on Adam and Eve in Paradise: "They were both naked, to wit Adam and Eve, and they were not ashamed" (Gen. ii, 25). On the other hand, when "All flesh had corrupted its way" (Gen. vi, 12) the Deluge showed the indignation of God;

and, soon after, to punish impurity, "The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorha brimstone and fire . . . and he destroyed these cities" (Gen. xix, 24, 25).

When the Son of God was about to come down and become a child of this sin-stained race, He prepared for Himself a temple of purity in the Blessed Virgin Mary. His favorite friends were chaste virginal souls, St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Apostle; and His other Apostles too left their wives and all things to follow Him. One of His first teachings was: "Blessed are the clean of heart" (St. Matth. v, 8). To teach the sanctity becoming the human body, it is anointed with sacred oil at Baptism and Confirmation, fed with the Divine Bread at Holy Communion, incensed at Solemn Mass and at burial, and laid in consecrated ground to rise again in glory. How we ought to respect this vessel of election!

*POINT II.* We have been selected from among thousands to constitute the virgin band of Christ's intimate friends. These are Divine nuptials of Jesus with the consecrated virgin soul, united together into closest union. To this holiness impurity is diametrically opposed. As adultery is the grossest sin against the sacred bond of matrimony, so is impurity the most degrading vice against the religious state; and as in St. Matthew's Gospel (xix, 9) marital infidelity is a just cause for rejection of the guilty party, so Jesus rejects the impure. The Book of Wisdom also declares that "Wisdom will not dwell in a body subject to sins" (i, 4).

*POINT III. Means to protect and perfect purity.*

1. *Prayer.* The Book of Wisdom says: "As I knew that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it, and this also was a point of wisdom to know whose gift it was, I went to the Lord and besought him" (viii, 21). This is one strong reason why religious should do so much more praying than seculars, that they are vowed to a life of perpetual purity. In particular there is need in this matter of habitual recourse to prayer at every assault of temptation.

2. *The practice of mortification;* for to the spirit of impurity apply the words of Christ: "This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting" (St. Mark. ix, 28).

3. Modesty of all the senses, especially of the eyes: "I made a covenant with my eyes, that I would not so much as think upon a virgin," said Holy Job (xxxix, 1), clearly indicating that the source of evil thoughts lies chiefly in the objects presented to the eyes.

4. *Avoiding the occasions* of temptations; for, while many other passions are best subdued by direct resistance to their promptings, that of lust must be overcome by flight. Therefore Ecclesiasticus warns us that "he that loveth danger shall perish in it" (iii, 27). Few servants of God had shown such heroic proofs of fidelity to duty amid multiplied and protracted trials as had King David; and yet the imprudence with which he exposed himself to an impure temptation made him in a few days an adulterer, a

tyrant and a murderer, and filled his remaining years of life with bitter sufferings.

We must carefully consider in every retreat how faithfully we make use of these various protections of angelic chastity; for "We have this treasure in earthen vessels" (2 Cor. iv, 7).

*Colloquy with our dear Lord and His Holy Mother.*

### MEDITATION III

#### THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE

*1st Prelude. Behold Christ learning a trade from St. Joseph.*

*2nd Prelude. Ask for high appreciation of obedience.*

*POINT I. Consider that all human beings must obey.* A wise God must establish order in all His works; hence the maxim: "Order is Heaven's first law." The material universe obeys the law of gravitation, the moral universe obeys the law of subordination of wills of inferiors to superiors, that is the law of obedience. Common sense teaches all mankind that children must obey their parents, servants their masters, subjects their lords, etc. When God came to share your nature, He put Himself to obey, and carried this virtue to the highest perfection, "becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross" (Phil. ii, 8). In positive legislation God has made this law universal. The Fourth Commandment directly enforces it (Ex. xx, 12). The law of Deuteronomy is still more forcible, saying: "He that will



be proud and refuse to obey the commandment of the priest who ministereth at the time to the Lord thy God, and the decree of the judge, that man shall die, and thou shalt take away the evil from Israel" (xvii, 12); and laying down the law for sacred services, God inflicted a sudden and disgraceful death on two young priests for using common instead of sacred fire (Levit. x, 1-3). He wished to set an example for all future ages.

*POINT II. Obedience is the characteristic virtue of our Society.* At the time of the Protestant Reformation there was a widespread spirit of rebellion against the authority of God; independence replaced obedience. The Holy Ghost then inspired St. Ignatius to institute a religious Order whose characteristic virtue should be that of obedience. He had been a brave soldier, and he wished to assemble a band of men, a company obeying orders with the promptness, punctuality and generosity of soldiers ever in active warfare. "Especially I desire," he writes, "to see you most perfect in the virtue of obedience." His letter on Obedience is the greatest masterpiece written on this matter, and his Institute is the most perfect exhibition of this virtue in action. It is, in fact, a close imitation of the obedient life of the God Incarnate. None but very obedient men are true Jesuits. Father Franciosi, in his work "The Spirit of St. Ignatius," has collected thirty pages of eulogies pronounced by the Saint on this his favorite virtue (pp. 61 to 92). He calls it "the noblest and most beautiful virtue," "the sweetest sacrifice, most pleasing to the

Divine Majesty," "a kind of martyrdom." He writes: "Obedience ennobles and elevates man greatly above his condition, causing him to put off self and to put on God, the sovereign good, who is accustomed to fill the soul so much the more as He finds it less occupied with self-will; so that those who have reached this state may truly, provided they obey from the bottom of their hearts, say with the Apostle: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."

*POINT III. How perfect ought our obedience to be?*

1. *In the execution*, it must be prompt, leaving even a letter unfinished; exact, rendered with military precision; generous, shirking no difficulty; universal in all things commanded and even at a mere sign of a superior's will without an express command; without show of reluctance, as a corpse is moved or an old man's staff employed.

2. *In the will*, which is exchanged for the will of the superior, so that there can be no conflict of wills.

3. *In the judgment*, "as far as a devout will can bend the understanding," says St. Ignatius, which can always be done when there is no compelling evidence to the contrary. Hence never any criticism, but such docility as the child Jesus showed when taught by St. Joseph the rules of his trade without suggesting any improvement.

*Colloquy with our dear Lord, asking for perfect obedience.*

## MEDITATION IV

## ON STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

*1st Prelude.* Recall the words of St. Paul: "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good" (Rom. xii, 21).

*2nd Prelude.* Ask to improve in vigor of character.

*POINT I.* *What is strength of character?* It is power of the will to control one's own actions, independently of one's inclinations and of the opinions of men. A weak character is led by mere feelings. These must be brought under control, conquered by the strength of the will and made to obey the dictate of reason. For this purpose we must resist our inclinations: "*Vince teipsum*," "Conquer thyself"; "*Tantum profeceris quantum tibi vim intuleris*," "Your progress will be proportioned to your self-victories," are undoubted maxims. And Christ says in the Apocalypse: "To him that shall overcome I will give to sit with me in my throne" (iii, 21).

What must we overcome? Whatever we find during the triduum to be disorderly in our daily conduct. Examine your rising at the first signal, your morning visit, meditation, hearing of Mass, reception of Holy Communion, and all the successive actions of the day. Resolve to correct what is faulty, to supply what is wanting, etc. Mere wishes are worthless; you must set to work.

*POINT II.* *Whence comes strength of character?*

1. It is of course, like every precious power, a gift of God: "Every best gift, and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of light" (St. James i, 17). Like all other gifts of God, it can be increased by earnest and persevering prayer. Many are fond of frequently repeating the petition: "Lord, grant me the grace of doing what Thou commandest, and then command what Thou wilt."

2. But it is not all a gift of God. Our will is free; nothing is so truly our own as our will. Even God will not control it. Being an immaterial power, it is not affected by sickness nor old age, as is evident from the heroism of the Martyrs.

3. A person's character may undergo great changes. Thus we read of St. Francis of Sales that his gentleness of temper was the result of strenuous and continuous efforts. In St. Ignatius "Unalterable calmness was the result of his vigorous perseverance in combatting the irascibility to which his constitution much inclined him" (Franciosi, Spir. of St. Ign., p. 149).

4. Often men of strong passions make most progress in virtue, as St. Ignatius found in Peter Ribadineira and Edmund Auger, who triumphed over great defects of character (Ib., p. 141).

*POINT III. How is strength of character increased or diminished?* This is chiefly effected by the successive acts of our free will. Every virtuous act strengthens our power of doing such virtuous acts again, and every yielding to our passions strengthens those passions, and in the same proportion weakens



our power of resistance to their promptings. For habits are formed by the repetition of acts, and habits become like a second nature. We are all bundles of habits; the habits determine the cast of character.

It is proper for each one to examine during the triduum whether he is now different from what he was at former times; for instance, at the completion of his novitiate or his entrance on more active duties—better or worse. We cannot long remain just the same. The religious life is like rowing against the current of a river: if we cease rowing, we are carried back. What is my present condition of fidelity to duty, of zeal, charity, obedience, piety, etc.?

*Colloquy*, as the occasion suggests.

## MEDITATION V

### ON CO-OPERATION WITH GRACE

*1st Prelude.* Imagine you see the thousands of happy souls in Heaven who worked out their salvation in our Society while on earth.

*2nd Prelude.* Ask for abundant grace to follow in their footsteps.

*POINT I.* *What manner of men were they on earth?*

They were very much like ourselves. They had the same human passions to control, the same rules to observe, the same labors to perform, the same sacrifices to make, etc. And to help them along they had the same aids that we have: the same loving Lord, who had called them from amid the dangers of the world,

as He has called us; the same training by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, the same holy Sacraments, the same everything; not of course in the same proportion for every individual soul; but enough of grace for all to live up to our grand vocation, and in due time to be with our blessed brethren in Heaven, as we are now their associates in the Society of Jesus on earth.

*POINT II. To what do those happy souls owe their success?*

The same grace of God in their case and in ours being presupposed, they owed their success to their faithful co-operation. The grace of God is in the matter of sanctification, what the spring is in a watch. All the movements of the wheels and the hands come from the spring; when that breaks all the other parts come to a perfect standstill. The powers of our body and soul are like the wheels of the watch which must work along with the spring to indicate the correct time. And of them one is free, namely our will. When our free will co-operates with grace, we lead holy lives. The spring of God's grace never fails; the only fear of failure regards our own free will. Now the purpose of this triduum is to examine how faithfully our will is seconding the promptings of grace. In this meditation we must ask God's light to understand the real condition of our soul, and next examine our conduct with care, to see whether our lives are up to the standard of faithful and fervent religious. How is God pleased with us? How are our superiors and our brethren in religion satisfied? Has any one a right to complain of us? What improvement can we make?

*POINT III. How can we obtain an increase of grace?* By prayer and faithful co-operation.

1. *Prayer* is the universal means by which all blessings can be obtained: "Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full" (St. John xvi, 24). But of course we must pray fervently and perseveringly; careless prayer leads to tepidity and loss of grace, rather than its increase. How fervently have I been praying of late?

2. Co-operation with graces given me is the most efficient means of obtaining a further supply of grace. And in proportion as graces abound the service of God is facilitated, and thus again further graces are secured: *Facile equitat quem gratia Dei portat*, "he rides along with ease who is carried up by the grace of God," is a familiar axiom. On the other hand, the want of co-operation with the grace given us makes us unworthy of a future liberal supply of God's help, and gradually leads a soul into tepidity, with all its serious consequences. We may be much encouraged to improve ourselves in these two means of sanctification, namely prayer and co-operation with grace, by frequently recalling to mind the examples set us by the Saints of our Society. These two means made them Saints and the same means will make us Saints, if we employ them with the same earnestness and perseverance as they did. Pray like the Saints, co-operate with the grace of God as the Saints habitually did, and you will soon be holy yourselves.

*Colloquy* with Jesus and Mary, to obtain great progress in the imitation of the Saints.

## MEDITATION VI

## THE PERFECTION OF OUR ACTIONS

*1st Prelude.* Behold our Divine Lord as a youth occupied in humble labor.

*2nd Prelude.* Ask for light and strength of will to do all things well.

*POINT I.* *The life of Christ is summed up in the words, "He hath done all things well," Bene omnia fecit (St. Mark vii, 37).*

For Jesuits these words contain a most safe, most effective and most comprehensive rule of action. This follows from the fact that our life is directly intended to be a close imitation of the life of Christ Himself. Such was certainly the grand ideal of our founder, St. Ignatius. The perfection he teaches is the imitation of Christ; and the entire life of Christ is described in this statement, "He did all things well." Any one of Ours who aims steadily at this practise is on the high-road to perfection; and one who does so throughout his life is a real saint. To such persons applies the saying of Father Isidore Boudreaux, S.J., which is quoted in our Menology: "The good novice makes the good scholastic and the good scholastic makes the good priest." Without this aim the pursuit of perfection is an illusion.

*POINT II.* *In this pursuit of sanctity we have no time to lose.* See how much was done in a short time by our young Saints, Aloysius, Stanislaus, Berchmans, and really by all our great models. For instance, St.



Francis had only ten years given him to accomplish his grand success in India and Japan. Very many of the Saints fulfilled a long space in a short time; a St. Catherine of Sienna, who benefited the Church so conspicuously, died at the age of 33 years. The career of any of you may be much briefer than you expect; but no matter how brief it be, it will be a very successful one if you do all things well.

*POINT III. What is required to do all things well?* It requires:

1. A good motive on all occasions; for the end specifies the act, determines its moral nature. In all your actions seek purely God's glory, the good of souls, the will of God, or any purpose that the faith proposes to us. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God," wrote St. Paul (I Cor. x, 31). It is not so much the offering of our actions to God that is here recommended, but rather the aiming in all we do at a supernatural effect. This higher aim renders our acts pleasing to God and meritorious for ourselves.

2. Attention to the least details of what you do, striving to impart to it the highest perfection you can. Thus the perfection of any work of art depends, not on the general outline only, but rather on the beauty imparted to every portion of the production, be it a painting, a statue, a literary composition, etc.

3. Careful avoidance of all negligent or defective work. For indulgence in carelessness not only spoils the task actually in hand, but also renders us less disposed to act well on subsequent occasions. Every

moral fault we commit fosters an evil habit. Let me examine with care with what perfection I have lately been accustomed to perform my actions, and resolve to amend all that needs correction.

*Colloquy*, according to the present condition of my soul.

THE END OF THE TRIDUUMS

















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